

Hafa Adai!

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## 2 more COVID-related deaths

By JOSHUA SANTOS  
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REPORTER

Christmas Day came with somber news on the COVID-19 front: The CNMI recorded its ninth and 10th COVID-19-related deaths, with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp, confirming

» **1.8K recovered;**  
**212 new cases**  
**ID'd in 4 days**

the fatalities on Dec. 25. CHCC said that more details will be provided later.

CHCC also reported that, as of Dec. 24, there have been a total of 1,809 recoveries and 748 active cases since Oct. 28.

As of Dec. 25, there have been 12 patients that have been hospitalized: nine unvaccinated and three vaccinated.

See DEATHS on Page 4

## Omicron latest blow to pandemic-weary front-line workers

BOSTON (AP)—Staff absences for COVID-19 tripled this month in London's hospitals, and nearly 10% of the city's firefighters called out sick.

In New York, about 2,700

police officers were absent earlier this week—twice the number who are ill on an average day. And on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, grocery worker Judy Snarsky says she's stretched to her limit,

working 50 hours a week and doing extra tasks because her supermarket has around 100 workers when it should have

See OMICRON on Page 4

### AT A GLANCE

As of 6:25pm, Dec. 26, 2021

#### VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **93%**  
Fully Vaccinated:

Days since last community transmission **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	36,432
Fully Vaccinated:	34,102
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,271
Fully Vaccinated:	4,833
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,117

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,427	5 <sup>1</sup>	19,432
Recovered	18,913	0	18,913
Active	244	5	249
Deaths	270	0	270

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	2,641	212 <sup>2</sup>	2,853
Traced via Travel Screening	290	13	303
Traced via Community Screening	2,351	199	2,550
Deaths	8	2	10

<sup>1</sup>12/25=1; 12/24=4

<sup>2</sup>12/25=34; 12/24=82; 12/23=96

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES  
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REPORTER

Local dive companies are worried that the recent burglary at Lau Lau Beach last week will only continue unless security is reinstated in the area.

According to Robbie Wyck-off, a diving instructor of three years, the diving community is shaken up by the burglary of

See LAU LAU on Page 4

### COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

#### LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

## Lau Lau Beach burglary worries dive companies

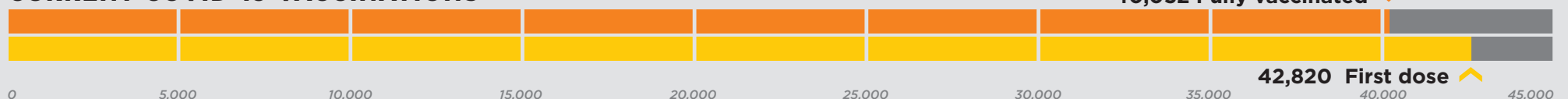


Police officers investigate and gather statements after the vehicles of two dive companies were broken into at Lau Lau Beach last Thursday. Reportedly, both trucks had their rear windows smashed and everything was stolen.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

### CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

40,052 Fully vaccinated



42,820 First dose

Source: [vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/](https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/)

### INSIDE



#### NATION

The world's largest and most powerful space telescope has rocketed away from South America.

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#### ASIA

A massive fire on a crowded river ferry in Bangladesh has left 40 people dead.

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#### LIFE & STYLE

Three members of the K-pop superstar group BTS have been infected with the coronavirus.

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## Local



## UFO holds donation drive for Typhoon Odette victims

By JOSHUA SANTOS  
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REPORTER

Volunteers of the CNMI United Filipino Organization held a donation drive at the San Jose Intersection last Dec. 24, with proceeds going to families affected by Super Typhoon Rai, known as Typhoon Odette in the Philippines,



CNMI United Filipino Organization volunteers conduct a donation drive at the San Jose intersection on Dec. 24. The proceeds will go to families affected by Super Typhoon Rai, known as Typhoon Odette in the Philippines. CNN reported last week that the death toll of the typhoon neared 400 with at least 500 injured and 56 still missing.

JOSHUA SANTOS

which devastated parts of the central Philippines. The initiative was spearheaded by UFO president Mar Masilungan.

*Saipan Tribune* reached out to Masilungan for comment yesterday, but was unable to get a response as of press time.

According to the website of nonprofit organization Direct Relief, it said that Typhoon Odette made landfall on Dec. 16 in the southern region of the Philippines and moved westward. With 168 mile-per-hour

winds, Direct Relief said that Typhoon Odette closely compares to a Category 5 hurricane.

Separately, CNN Philippines on Dec. 22 reported that the Philippine National Police at the time reported that at least 375 people have died, at least 515 injured, and almost 60 people missing due to destruction caused by the typhoon.

Authorities reported agriculture damage and losses across 10 regions amounting to \$51.6 million.

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## JGO Committee not done yet with probe on Torres

The House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee is not done yet with its investigation into Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels as the committee has yet to call in Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig to testify.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry, JGO chair Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) said yesterday that they still

have an outstanding subpoena for Atalig.

Babauta said that Atalig had asked the committee to give him a few days to seek legal representation soon after being served the subpoena.

"We have not released him from the subpoena served on him," Babauta said.

She said that commanding Atalig to testify this January is an option that is still open to

the committee.

Atalig informed Babauta in a letter last Dec. 7 that his office received the subpoena last Dec. 3 when he was off-island. Atalig said he just returned last Dec. 7 to Saipan and need to reschedule the date of his testimony to allow him to obtain a lawyer and comply with the subpoena.

He said while he is beginning the process of getting an attorney approved by Attorney Gen-

eral Edward Manibusan, he believes this will take a day or two.

Atalig added that because of the CNMI government shutdown, he will have minimum staff to assist in gathering the documents requested by the JGO subpoena.

Atalig requested to reschedule any appearance before the JGO to Dec. 15, 2021, but the JGO did not hold a hearing on that date.

Last Dec. 14, the committee voted to hold Torres in contempt for not appearing before the committee.

Citing that the Executive Branch is a separate and equal branch of government under the Commonwealth Constitution, Torres announced about an hour before the JGO Committee meeting that day (Dec. 14 at 10:30am) that he will not be appearing before the committee.

Torres and the Office of the

Governor then filed a lawsuit that day before the Superior Court against the committee.

Torres accused the committee of having a simple agenda of impeaching him.

Last Dec. 20, Babauta formally introduced House Resolution 22-14 impeaching Torres for alleged commission of felonies, corruption, and neglect of duty in violation of Article 3, Section 19 of the CNMI Constitution. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

## Attao files bill to cap monthly utility charges for select officials at \$1,000

» **Bill seeks to clarify provision of official residences for eligible officials**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

House of Representatives vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) has introduced a bill that seeks to clarify the provision of official residences for eligible elected officials. The official residences and its associated utility billings were among the issues brought up before the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, which is investigating Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' ex-

penditures of public funds.

House Bill 22-88, which Attao introduced during last week's House session, also seeks to amend a statute to implement a cap on the amount of utility charges allowed per month for the governor and lieutenant governor.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) last week appointed Attao to chair the Special Investigating Committee on Impeachment that will evaluate whether to impeach Torres.

Attao is supporting Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' intent to run as governor in the November 2022 gubernatorial election.

According to Attao's legislation, 1 CMC Section 8222 is vague and needs to be amend-

ed to add proper safeguards. The bill will add provisions clarifying the use of private residences in the absence of functional government dwellings and implement a cap on allowable utility charges.

The statute currently states that the governor, lieutenant governor, Senate president, and the House speaker "are authorized to obtain government houses for their private and residential purposes for the duration of their term in such office." But for decades now, such government houses have either been condemned or classified as damaged and not fit for human habitation.

As a result, Attao underscored the need to update existing law to govern how the provision of official residenc-

es shall be handled in the absence of suitable government dwellings.

Attao also stressed the importance of implementing a cap on the utility consumption amount for each of these residences.

House Bill 22-88 seeks to amend the statute to remove the Senate president and House speaker from being authorized to obtain government houses for their private and residential purposes for the duration of their term in such offices.

Under the bill, if government-owned houses are unavailable for this purpose, a privately-owned residence may be designated the official residence for each of these elected officials. In these

cases, such officials are authorized to receive publicly-funded payment of utilities at such privately-owned residences up to a cap of \$1,000 per month. Any utilities payment in excess of such cap shall be considered a personal expense and the responsibility of the elected officials.

Utilities may be paid at public expense only in residential structures, the bill states.

If government-owned houses are certified as unfit for habitation or otherwise unavailable, the Personnel Office may designate a privately-owned residence for temporary assignment as the official residence of each of these elected officials until such time as government houses are available for such purpose.

The enactment of this bill "shall not have the effect of terminating...any liability, civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence at the date of this Act becomes effective."

The bill's co-authors are Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), floor leader Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan), and Reps. Joel C. Camacho (Ind-Saipan), Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), John Paul A. Sablan (R-Saipan), Joseph A. Flores (Ind-Saipan), and Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan).

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# SMA proposes OPA to serve as mediator in dispute with CPA

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

Although Star Marianas Airlines Inc. has resumed its regular scheduled flights, the airline still disagrees with the Commonwealth Ports Authority's new method of assessing airport usage fees and would like the Office of the Public Auditor to serve as the third-party in the ongoing dispute.

According to a letter from Star Marianas president Shaun Christian to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, because

the CPA allegedly continues to deny Star Marianas' argument over the new method in assessing airport usage fees, the airline recommends that a third party, such as the Office of the Public Auditor, examine these regulations and provide an independent assessment of the fees the CPA is attempting to impose on all aeronautical users at the airports.

"Star contacted an independent certified public accountancy firm that is willing to assist the OPA in evaluating the fees the CPA intends to impose. The results of such re-

views would be invaluable when the CPA undertakes to amend the regulations. Naturally, such an undertaking will take time," he said.

During the meeting with Torres last week, SMA expressed its concerns that CPA's representation of fees the CPA is assessing for use of the CNMI's airports has been distorted and that several significant provisions in regulations have not been disclosed by CPA.

Aside from proposing OPA to serve as a third party, Star Marianas also suggested two possible scenar-

ios to resolve the ongoing dispute, one of which is reinstating the previous Airport Use Agreement that has since been terminated.

"One would be for the CPA to pursue revisions to regulations in an effort to achieve a fee methodology that can be unilaterally 'imposed' on the airport users because it is purely compensatory. Or two, the CPA can, by agreement with the aeronautical users, reinstate the Airport Use Agreement which was previously unilaterally terminated," he said.

"Star [Marianas] has indicated a willingness to consider the second option, but that would need a fresh CPA management team that is interested in fulfilling the assurances

and responsibilities for an airport sponsor receiving federal funding, knowledgeable of the regulations, and willing to work with all aeronautical users that are conducting operations at the airports in the CNMI," he said.

Last Dec. 23, Star Marianas resumed its scheduled interisland service following a meeting with the CNMI administration regarding airport usage fee subsidy.

It was learned that following the meeting with Torres last Tuesday, the U.S Department of Transportation granted the airline's request to resume commuter operations after being found fit, willing, and able to conduct its operations as a commuter air carrier.

## Woman allegedly sold mother-in-law's furniture without permission

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**  
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REPORTER

A woman was arrested for allegedly selling her mother-in-law's furniture without her permission and forging her checks.

Liva Marie Seman Fital, 39, was arrested last Dec. 12 for theft after selling her mother-in-law's furniture and forging her checks. She was brought to the Superior Court last week for a bail hearing.

Fital appeared before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho who imposed a \$2,500 cash bail for the defendant. She was remanded to the custody of the Department of Corrections.

During her hearing, assistant public defender Vina Seelam was

appointed by the court to represent Fital while assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas appeared for the government.

The judge ordered Fital to return to court on Dec. 29 at 10am for a preliminary hearing and again on Jan. 10 at 9am for her arraignment.

According to court documents, Fital is accused of stealing and forging several personal checks, and selling several pieces of home furniture and appliances of her mother-in-law.

The victim said Fital stole 12 sets of food warmer, one front load washer, and dryer and home tools, all of which have an approximate value of \$4,000.

The victim said she found out about the forged checks after a fam-

ily member showed her a copy of a denied check from the bank, of which the victim had no knowledge, adding that she had not signed it. She said she was visited by several store owners demanding payments because of bounced checks.

Police also talked to a person who said she bought several pieces of furniture from Fital in late August and in September.

She said she wants her money back from Fital before she surrenders the furniture.

She said Fital was selling the furniture for \$800 at the time but accepted \$300 as payment.

Police showed the victim the pieces of furniture and she positively identified them as her belongings.

## OMICRON

From Page 1

closer to 150.

"We don't have enough hands. Everybody is working as much as they physically and mentally can," the 59-year-old in Mashpee said. "Some of us have been going like a freight train."

The worldwide surge in coronavirus cases driven by the new omicron variant is the latest blow to hospitals, police departments, supermarkets and other critical operations struggling to maintain a full contingent of front-line workers as the pandemic enters its third year.

Governments have taken steps to stem the bleeding across a range of jobs considered essential for society, from truckers and janitors to child care providers and train conductors. But nurses and other workers worry that continued staffing woes will put the public at greater risk and increase burnout and fatigue among their ranks.

Seattle Officer Mike Solan, who leads his city's police union, said his department is down about 300 officers from its usual force of 1,350.

"It's difficult for our community because they're waiting for that call for help," he said. "And then we're at risk because we don't have the proper safe numbers to have a safe working environment when we answer that call for help."

Michelle Gonzalez, a nurse at New York's Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, said she and her intensive care unit colleagues never truly had a break from COVID-19, and the arrival of omicron has only reawak-

ened her post-traumatic stress.

"Prior to work, I get really bad anxiety," she said. "If I've been off for two days, I will come back in a panic because I don't know what I'm walking into."

Countries including Spain and the U.K. have reduced the length of COVID-19 quarantines to ease staffing shortages by letting people return to work sooner after testing positive or being exposed to the virus. The U.S. did similar for health care workers only.

Meanwhile in the U.S., states such as Massachusetts have called in hundreds of National Guard members to help fill the gaps in hospitals and nursing homes, where they serve meals, transport patients and do other nonclinical work.

In Seattle, Mayor Jenny Durkan has promised to veto legislation repealing a \$4-an-hour hazard pay raise for grocery workers, which has been in place for nearly a year in some major West Coast cities, including Los Angeles and Berkeley and Long Beach, California.

"Now is not the time to roll back the pay for these critical front-line workers," the Democratic mayor said earlier this week.

Unions representing health care workers gripe that far too many hospitals failed to fill staff vacancies or to retain pandemic-weary staff.

For example, there are 1,500 nursing vacancies in New York's three largest hospitals alone, or about double the number at the onset of the pandemic, said Carl Ginsberg, a spokesman for the 42,000-member New York State Nurses Association.

"There are not enough nurses to do the job right, and so there are situations where the units have dangerous conditions, where patients are in jeopardy," he said.

In London, the U.K.'s omicron epicenter, a wave of staff absences is hitting hospitals just as COVID-19 admissions have doubled in three weeks. The latest surge will probably persist until mid-January, officials said.

"It wouldn't take much to cause a crisis," said David Oliver, a consultant physician at a hospital in south-east England.

The operators of U.S. nursing homes, which were crippled by some of the deadliest COVID-19 outbreaks early in the pandemic, are among those pleading for officials to do more.

While cases in long-term care facilities have not risen sharply yet, the industry is bracing for omicron with 15% fewer workers today than when the pandemic began, said Rachel Reeves, a spokesperson for the American Health Care Association and the National Center for Assisted Living, an industry trade group.

Nursing homes historically struggle to compete with other health care operators because their pay rates are effectively fixed by the government, she said, so providers hope President Joe Biden's administration can boost Medicaid funding and create staff recruitment and retention programs.

"Caregivers are burned out," Reeves said. "Not only have many experienced tremendous loss, it has been exhausting—physically and emotionally—battling this virus day in and day out."

## DEATHS

From Page 1

Two of the 12 are on a ventilator, and five patients have already been discharged.

From Dec. 21 to 24, CHCC confirmed a total of 212 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 2,853.

A total of 82 cases were confirmed on Dec. 21 and Dec. 23. Two cases were confirmed on Dec. 21 and 80 on Dec. 23. Of the 82, 35 were found through contact tracing, 46 through community testing, and one through travel testing.

A total of 96 cases were confirmed on Dec. 22. Of the 96, 48 were found through contact tracing, 42 through community testing, and six through travel testing.

A total of 34 cases were confirmed on Dec. 24. Of the 34, 14 were found through contact tracing, 14 through

community testing, and six through travel testing.

In its multiple releases over this four-day period, CHCC said the vaccination status of the new cases were pending verification.

CHCC said its Communicable Disease Investigation/ Inspection team "has already initiated contact tracing for the most immediate contacts of the newly confirmed cases, and this effort will continue until all probable cases are identified and tested."

If you have concerns regarding possible exposure to positive case, CHCC asks that you call its contact tracers no later than 9pm at (670) 285-1942, (670) 286-1710, or (670) 286-1711.

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, which includes fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, or new loss of taste or smell, CHCC asks that you see your health care provider or call the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at 670-233-2067.

## LAU LAU

From Page 1

two vehicles belonging to two local dive companies last Thursday.

He explained that not only are they worried that the burglary may turn into a string of break-ins, they also worry that this might leave a bad image of the CNMI among tourists.

"Dive companies here are worried that the break-ins might continue and with the two recent vehicles having been broken into, vandalized, and tourists having had their wallets, IDs, and bags stolen, this looks bad for the CNMI," he said.

The Department of Public Safety has yet to release information about the incident. *Saipan Tribune* has reached out to the for details of the burglary but DPS had yet to respond as of press time.

Wyckoff said this was not the first time a break-in happened at the Lau Lau Beach. He said three other local dive companies have reported vehicle break-ins at the popular dive site this year alone, which is why dive companies fear it will only continue.

He said this could be a result of lack of security in the area.

"Lau Lau hasn't had any security there since the [COVID-19] lockdown and three companies have had

their vehicles broken into this year. It's time that security comes back," Wyckoff said.

In the meantime, while they wait for the Marianas Visitors Authority to reinstate security in the area, Wyckoff said that diving companies have banded together to take matters into their own hands by setting up hidden cameras in the area to hopefully catch whoever is behind the burglaries.

"In the meantime, companies are taking their own measures to make sure these people are caught. Hidden cameras will be set up to help catch these people. The government sign that has been vandalized for months at Lau Lau—with the marking 'K' carved into it—is a daily reminder to everyone visiting Lau Lau Beach that troublemakers sometimes pass by," he said.

The diving community also seeks help from the CNMI community in helping uncover who is behind these burglaries and vandalism at the Lau Lau Beach.

"We would love to let the public know that this is happening, along with the vandalism that was caused there at Lau Lau on the government sign with the marking 'K3'. We need help from the public as well in catching them if anyone knows anything," the dive instructor said.



# MSC contracted mariners share holiday cheer on Saipan



Contracted mariners assigned to USNS *Dahl* (T-AKR 312), USNS *Red Cloud* (T-AKR 313), USNS *Charlton* (T-AKR 314), USNS *Pililaau* (T-AKR 304), USNS *William R. Button* (T-AK 3012) and MV *Bernard F. Fisher* (T-AK 4396) donate toys and trinkets for residents of Guma' Esperansa. The shelter provides a temporary safe haven for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, and their children in the CNMI.

CAPT. DEATRA THOMPSON

By **LESLIE HULL-RYDE**

MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND FAR EAST

Santa had some extra help from special elves aboard several Military Sealift Command ships currently on Saipan.

Contracted mariners assigned to USNS *Dahl* (T-AKR 312), USNS *Red Cloud* (T-AKR 313), USNS *Charlton* (T-AKR 314), USNS *Pililaau* (T-AKR 304), USNS *2nd Lt. John P. Bobo* (T-AK 3008) and MV *Bernard F. Fisher* (T-AK 4396) voluntarily donated toys and trinkets for residents of Guma' Esperansa. The shelter provides a temporary safe haven for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, and their children in the CNMI.

"Residents of the shelter usually arrive only with the clothing on their backs. The residents often do not have the financial ability to purchase presents for the children, and the shelter itself has a hard time simply making ends meet to provide food and shelter for them," said Capt. Deatra Thompson, master of USNS *Dahl*, who helped synchronize the efforts of the generous Military Sealift Command volunteer donors.

"Being in the shelter is a traumatic time for a child. They are usually frightened, and their futures are uncertain. Providing the toys and stockings gives them some semblance of normality and happiness during a very stressful period."

Thompson says this effort not only brings some holiday cheer to the residents during the season but allows them to begin to accumulate personal possessions and good memories. She explains that the children can take the toys and stockings with them to their new homes when they leave the shelter.

"The Christmas toy donations from the ship crews add a special touch; often they are the only gifts the children receive during the holidays,"

said Lauri Ogumoro, executive director of Karidat, the parent organization responsible for the administration of Guma' Esperansa. "Watching the children open their presents in the shelter is such a joy, but the joy on their mother's faces says a lot more."

In addition to the gifts and stockings filled with surprises for the little ones, the mariners donated items for the mothers in the shelter too.

Thompson explains that the entire project was a collaborative one, not only among the crews who represent several operating companies but with the community as well.

Before delivering the items to the shelter, the mariners joined efforts with the local chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars, which provided the venue for the MSC crews to wrap each item for the residents. A local shipping company provides transportation for the mariners and the gifts to and from the VFW for the "wrapping party" and the materials to wrap all the gifts.

All the ships participating in this toy drive are assigned to Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron 3. These ships preposition containerized and palletized cargo and equipment for U.S. Armed Forces operating throughout the 7th Fleet Area of Responsibility.

"It is important to understand that this effort is not any one ship, any one [operating company] or any one union. This is a combined effort of all the [Military Sealift Command] vessels here in Saipan over the holidays," Thompson said.

"We do all this not only because there is a definite need but the entire effort also brings all the sailors from different unions, operating companies and ships together. For this, all the crews are unified to do something good and be part of something greater than ourselves during the holidays when we are all away from home."

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**- Mary Cruz (San Antonio, Saipan)**

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Richard V. Salas  
Director, DCRM

## NOTICE OF CRM PUBLIC HEARING TINIAN AIRPORT PARKING LOT EXPANSION PROJECT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. TMS-97-X-294-A1

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be holding a public hearing for the proposed expansion of the Tinian International Airport Parking Lot at the Tinian International Airport.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is proposing to expand the existing Tinian Airport Parking lot area to include fifty-five (55) parking stalls, traffic signage, pavement markings, upgrading the ramps, and 100% solar powered parking street lights. The project site is situated on Lot No. T72 T 01/02. The parking lot expansion site measures about 65,056 square feet or 1.49 acres in size.

The public hearing for this project is scheduled on **Tuesday, January 25, 2022, at 5:00PM, at the Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria in San Jose, Tinian.**

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/6706648315>. Our Zoom meeting access code may change so please call the DCRM Permitting Office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance at least one-day prior to the public hearing date.

If you are unable to attend, written comments can be submitted to the DCRM Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or sent by fax at 664-8315, or by email at [ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:ssablan@dcrm.gov.mp). The project files are open for review and comments during business hours of 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Tinian Airport Parking Lot Expansion project.

/s/ Richard V. Salas  
Director  
Division of Coastal Resources Management

## ‘NMI getting \$999K for economic dev’t planning’

The CNMI is receiving \$999,755 as part of the American Rescue Plan for economic development planning, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan disclosed in his e-kilili newsletter that U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina M. Raimondo had announced the funding last Wednesday as a means to accelerate the five territories’ economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sablan said the funding will support local tourism, expand infrastructure and broadband, and provide businesses’ access to recruitment, capital, and workforce training.

“In the long term, these grants will help build a resilient Marianas economy through the sustainable use of local programs and resources,” he said.

According to Raimondo’s announcement, all 59 states and five territories have been

awarded approximately \$1 million grants through DOC’s Economic Development Administration’s Statewide Planning program—one of six programs EDA developed to equitably distribute its \$3 billion in American Rescue Plan funding.

The Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and U.S. Virgin Islands were each awarded \$1 million, while Republic of Palau was awarded \$996,728. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

## Torres says they are ‘addressing’ DOC manpower shortage

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres said Tuesday last week that they are trying to address the acute manpower shortage at the Department of Corrections in Susupe after a few Corrections officers and some inmates tested positive for COVID-19.

Torres said the situation at DOC is a little different because DOC officers have specialized trainings and that they cannot just pull anybody from anywhere and assign them there.

The governor said they are looking into cross-training those that have prior work history with DOC to augment its manpower. He said they are also trying to obtain help from the Department of Public Safety.

House of Representative vice speaker Blas Jonathan T.

Attao (R-Saipan) disclosed Monday the severe manpower shortage at DOC due to some Corrections officers and inmates testing positive for the virus. Attao said some police officers were then sent to DOC to beef up its manpower, but a few of them also

caught the virus, depleting their manpower even more.

The vice speaker has emphasized the need to help DOC through emergency hiring of Corrections officers to address the worsening manpower shortage situation. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

## Public warned of rip current risk

The public is being warned that a high rip current risk now is now in effect through Monday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, large breaking waves up to 9 feet are producing dangerous rip currents in east facing reefs through this afternoon.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The public is advised to stay out of the water along east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don’t swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. **(PR)**



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



### INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

## KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

*The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.*

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

**One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST** be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission’s (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC’s Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org), with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at [larry.manacop@cucgov.org](mailto:larry.manacop@cucgov.org), Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at [joel.puyat@cucgov.org](mailto:joel.puyat@cucgov.org) and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address at [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



## NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

Email: [nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp) | Website: <http://www.nmhcgov.net>

AMENDMENT NO. 1

## PUBLIC NOTICE

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – DISASTER RECOVERY (CDBG-DR) FEDERAL CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENT PRESENTATION ON SECTION 3, DAVIS BACON AND RELATED ACTS (DBRA), ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS, FAIR LABOR, FAIR HOUSING & NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

12/02/2021

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is conducting a Federal Cross-Cutting presentation for all interested contractors planning to conduct business with the NMHC. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages all HUD funded programs to comply with these requirements.

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. The purpose of Section 3 is to ensure employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State and local laws and regulations, be directed to low-and very low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low-and very low-income person.

Davis Bacon and Related Acts: require the payment of prevailing wages to laborers and mechanics employed on the site of the work of certain federal or federally assisted contracts for construction, alteration, or repair.

An Environmental Review is the process of reviewing a project and its potential environmental impacts to determine whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards. The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have an adverse environmental or health effect on end users

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law which establishes minimum wage, overtime pay eligibility, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, as well as in residential real-estate related transactions such as advertising, mortgage lending, homeowner’s insurance and zoning.

As a recipient of HUD financial assistance, NMHC CDBG-DR is required as the non-Federal entity to take necessary steps to ensure that all Subrecipients, Contractors, subcontractors, and/or developers funded in whole or in part with CDBG-DR financial assistance ensure that, when possible, contracts and other economic opportunities are directed to small and minority firms, women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), and labor surplus area firms.

**The Federal Cross-Cutting Requirement presentation is postponed till December 29, 2021, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Teleconferencing. You may access the Zoom Teleconference link at [www.nmhcgov.net](http://www.nmhcgov.net) Public Notice/Announcement tab or [www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com](http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com).**

If you may have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at [officemanager@nmhcgov.net](mailto:officemanager@nmhcgov.net).

/s/  
Jesse S. Palacios  
Corporate Director

Tinian Field Office  
Tel: (670)433-9213  
Fax: (670)433-3690

**“NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency”**

Rota Field Office  
Tel: (670)532-9410  
Fax: (670)532-9441



# Lawsuit for non-payment of PUA benefits dismissed

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has dismissed with finality the lawsuit filed by a man against Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente and the CNMI Department of Labor over the non-payment of his Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

Chief Judge Ramona V.

Manglona dismissed with prejudice the complaint of Zaji Obatala Zajradhara against DOL and Benavente and directed the court clerk to close the case.

The case was first dismissed for lack of jurisdiction, but Manglona allowed Zajradhara

to file an amended complaint by Sept. 13, 2021, if he still wishes to pursue his claim, and warned him that failure to file any amended complaint by the deadline would result in the court dismissing and closing the case. Zajradhara timely sought an

extension of time by an additional 45 days to file his amended complaint, which the court granted. Manglona then instructed Zajradhara to file his first amended complaint no later than Oct. 28, 2021. Over a month since the deadline, the court had not

received any first amended complaint or any other filings from Zajradhara.

"It may be that plaintiff... has found an alternative forum for his remedy," Manglona said.

According to court documents, back in February 2020,

Zajradhara asked the court to issue an order instructing DOL to pay him \$7,380. He claims he had already been adjudicated as a beneficiary but DOL purposely did not pay him his PUA benefits even after repeated phone calls/emails. *(Kimberly B. Esmores)*



## BOUNTIFUL GIFTS FOR CHCC

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. received a donation of stuffed animals and children's books for its pediatric unit from the Taga Riders Motorcycle Club, based in the continental U.S. In a letter from founders George + Terry Camacho, it said this was their 27th year of doing this act of kindness in giving to communities such as CHCC and other groups since being established in 1994. The CHCC also received a donation from Toys for Tots with help from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce. The CHCC is grateful for the community's efforts.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



## How to gather safely during the holidays

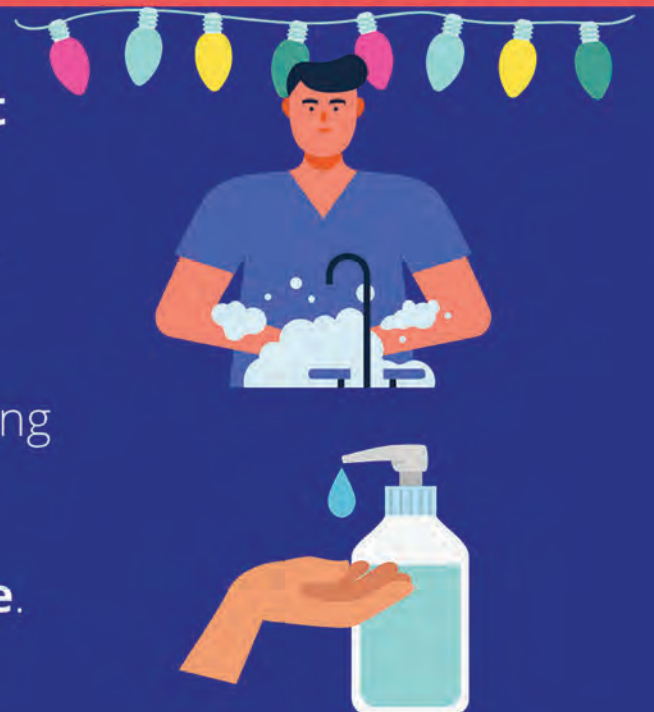


# WASH YOUR HANDS

Wash your hands often with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds**, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Learn more at [www.staysafecnmi.com/livecovidsafe](http://www.staysafecnmi.com/livecovidsafe).



@cnmichcc | [www.chcc.gov.mp](http://www.chcc.gov.mp)



# Opinion

Hafa Adai!

## Saipan Tribune

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### EDITORIAL

## The US needs to wake up and mandate vaccines for domestic flights, not just international

Over the coming days, millions of Americans are expected to board an airplane heading for someplace to spend the holidays—very possibly in the company of the newest and wildest strain of the coronavirus, omicron.

The invisible hitchhiker will find it difficult to board international flights, as travelers to far-flung destinations are subject to all manner of COVID-19 requirements. But for the thousands of domestic flights taking off between now and the end of 2021, the coronavirus will find easier access. There are no national COVID-19 vaccination and testing requirements for domestic air travel, just the much-violated mask mandate that's supposed to keep infections to a minimum as dozens of people are crowded together in a metal tube for hours at a time.

That's nuts, and there was some hope that President Joe Biden might consider new rules on domestic air travel as part of his latest coronavirus action plan announced Tuesday. He did not, instead offering Americans free rapid tests upon request, which we really may need when they are finally available next year.

It's not too late for Biden to change course. He and state and local leaders are right not to impose new lockdowns on Americans, but there's room for sensible protections at this critical point in the pandemic, such as the requirement to vaccinate or test to fly domestically, as suggested by a group of Democratic lawmakers, including California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, in a letter Monday to the heads of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Aviation Administration. Not only is it sound public health policy, they note, it would assuage concerns that passengers have about flying.

It is also pretty darn reasonable. This would not force anyone to get a shot they didn't want, but it would stop those with active infections from flying. Airlines are in the document-checking business already, and many carriers already have COVID-19 document verification systems in place for their international travelers.

Airlines say that their passenger cabins have excellent ventilation systems and studies support the assertion that they aren't recirculating the virus. But no matter how excellent the air quality may be, passengers sitting close together may still be exposed to one another directly. Masks aren't foolproof and must be removed for eating and drinking, which is still allowed on planes.

Besides, there's still a lot we don't know about omicron, other than it replicates and spreads terrifyingly fast. Former CDC Director Thomas Frieden tweeted earlier this week that "I've worked on infectious disease outbreaks for 30 years. I've NEVER seen anything like the speed of omicron. It's as infectious as measles spreading in a non-immune population, with a much shorter incubation time therefore much faster doubling time. Hope it's a lot less severe."

So do we. And the early data suggest that the sickness from omicron is generally milder than earlier variants. But even a milder form of COVID-19 can be deadly to those with underlying conditions and who are not vaccinated.

It's not just time for COVID-19 vaccination and testing rules for domestic flights, it's past time.

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## Marine Corps is a stressed-out organization

The U.S. Marine Corps is experiencing all kinds of pressures and stressors both internal and external to the organization. The Marines have a lot of work-in-progress efforts to attend to in order to remain relevant and useful toward protecting American interests abroad.

The Marines also have a lot of work to do to further support a variety of naval operations. Major organizational change in the form of redesigning Marine Corps forces stems directly from the White House's national security strategy issued during President Trump's tenure in 2018. The most senior Marine Corps leaders are spending extraordinary amounts of time on working through this matter.

The Marines need large new surface ships that can take them to and from areas where they need to fight. The Marines lack the authority to simply place orders for the construction and delivery of new transport ships. The Marines don't control the money and don't make final decisions for purchasing new ships.

The Navy remains committed to spending money on constructing ships that can freely operate throughout the deep blue Pacific ocean landscape as opposed to near shore spaces carrying around Marines.

### Political fallout and the need for the Marine Corps to get things right

Marine Corps leaders continue to have a difficult time managing the political fallout from last year's mishap where several Marines and one sailor died after the amphibious vehicle they were navigating sank hundreds of feet into the ocean off the California coast.

This accident created a firestorm within and outside the Marine Corps that led to several high-level investigations into the causes of the accident. One outcome of this mishap is that the Marines are no longer using amphibious assault vehicles to train worldwide.

Marines continue to hitch rides on ships that are allied military vessels as one of several ways to manage a variety of military missions ranging from forceable entry activities to performing humanitarian assistance work. Perhaps this is one way to save taxpayers billions of dollars in transportation costs, but it is a strategy that is heavily dependent on foreign military leaders.

Closer to home, Marine Corps leaders have not yet fully satisfied concerns and answered lingering questions tied to the destruction of our ancient Chamorro human resource corridors in Guam. Questions also remain unanswered when it comes to understanding just how toxins produced from the future firing range complex will be cleaned up in the air, ground surface and subsurface domains. Concerns over cost of living, increasing solid waste production, and quality of life issues also remain outstanding.

The decision to build a firing range complex over the north-

### RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ

Special to the Saipan Tribune



*Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.*

ern water lens is a recipe for additional freshwater contamination risks and possible disasters for the future of Guam's villager population.

### Where the Marine Corps is headed

The Marines are trying to properly place themselves in the broader Pentagon modernization effort to prepare for the full range of future military operations in support of naval missions and it's painful to watch.

The Marines have been cutting personnel costs, ridding themselves of heavy land weapons such as tanks, shutting down infantry units, cutting back on rotary wing aircraft inventories, and looking for ways to better apply technology resources that give the Marine Corps the ability to destroy and damage intended targets using aircraft systems and land combat vehicles that are unmanned, while also looking for ways to fight across the entire electromagnetic spectrum.

The Marines continue to also struggle with retaining pilots and properly maintaining existing aircraft assets and using newly produced state-of-the-art fixed wing airplanes.

### Complexity is the future

American military forces, including the Marine Corps, have lost unfettered access and control of the Pacific Ocean region, especially in the western Pacific and China's near seas areas.

The Marines are trying to radically transform and reconstitute how they prepare and fight future wars over shorter periods of time, after fighting the past 20 years in landlocked areas of the world.

The Marines are attempting to return to their ocean-based roots and are doing it in a way that assumes great power competition with China and closer collaboration with the Navy.

Because all this is happening literally in our Blue Ocean continent backyard, it is in our collective Chamorro Pacific Islander civilization interest to continue to pay very close attention because our natural resource corridors remain at risk.



# Without context, COVID tallies are misleading

Since the start of the pandemic, public health authorities have been fastidiously counting the number of people infected with the coronavirus. For both the medical profession and the media, these rising figures have been the principal way of framing the pandemic in the U.S.: “124,000 new cases a day,” “802,000 COVID deaths since February 2020.” But this information offers an incomplete picture of the crisis, potentially warping the public’s understanding in ways that could prolong the pandemic and even add to its toll.

What’s missing from the day-to-day conversation is the number of uninfected people and the number of infected people who survive COVID-19. That provides a denominator to put the other figures in context. If there were 124,000 new infections per day, how many people were exposed? If 802,000 people died from COVID, how many were infected but didn’t die?

Indeed, such information is the most underreported story of the pandemic. But it has long been an important piece of public health information. It advances our understanding of the nature of the disease; it hints at the power of precautions such as masks and vaccines; and it can allay fears and trauma that people are experiencing about the seemingly never-ending nature of the pandemic.

Our reliance on numbers to understand epidemics can be traced to the development of epidemiology—when medical and scientific authorities had not yet uncovered how microbes caused the spread of infectious disease. Between 1755 and 1866, when epidemiology emerged, medical practitioners believed that environmental factors caused disease. Based on this inaccurate view, they had few effective metrics to understand the origins of epidemics. As such, they counted the number of uninfected and infected patients; the number who contracted a disease and the number who died; they examined those who were hospitalized and those released.

Counting was a way to rationalize infectious disease and to create a narrative about it. For example, during the Crimean War in the 1850s, the nurse and statistician Florence Nightingale witnessed that more British soldiers died once they were admitted to the hospital, but she couldn’t see the germs that were infecting

them. What she could see, she counted: the number of healthy and the number of sick soldiers, inside and outside hospitals. By creating a clear analytical assessment, she then observed how the unsanitary conditions within hospitals correlated with alarming mortality rates. According to Nightingale, a “complete system of sanitary statistics in the army” was necessary “to administer the laws of health with that certainty.”

Statistics, and exploring the behaviors behind them, became a key component in epidemiological analysis because that’s all that health experts had—and it helped them craft treatment strategies.

In response to a cholera outbreak in Calcutta, known today as Kolkata, William Twining, a British military doctor there, published an influential comprehensive volume on diseases in 1832. The treatise provided copious detail of hospital attendants who came into close contact with cholera patients and soiled linens but did not become ill. Had the text focused solely on people who became sick, a reader might have been misled about the risk of the disease, or led to look for its causes in the wrong place. With context about the unaffected, the study offered key evidence that cholera was not transmitted through direct contact.

It was another set of counterexamples two decades later that helped the young science of epidemiology to zero in on the culprit. John Snow, a physician in London, famously found the common denominator among cholera cases in an 1854 outbreak: Those who became sick seemed to all have drunk water from a pump in the center of a poor neighborhood. Cementing his conclusion was the fact that employees at a nearby brewery, which had its own pump, did not contract cholera.

Learning about the daily lives of these brewery workers led Snow to theorize that cholera was transmitted through contaminated drinking water. To understand how a disease spread, he was equally invested in the infected and the uninfected.

As epidemiology evolved as a field, medical authorities continued to consider the uninfected by developing a new statistic: incidence rate or attack rate, which is still used today. This refers to the number of new infected cases within a specific period measured against the population. While epidemiologists tabulate this rate, the media does not typically broadcast it. Instead, we

By **JIM DOWNS**

Los Angeles Times

*Jim Downs, Gilder Lehrman-NEH professor of history at Gettysburg College, is the author of *Maladies of Empire: How Colonialism, Slavery and War Transformed Medicine*.*



are inundated with the crude morbidity and mortality (infection and death) rates.

In short, reporting the number of infected offers a numerator but we are missing the denominator. We need a clearer empirical accounting.

A recent example shows why the missing denominator is important: This past summer, the media jumped on one of the first major outbreaks of breakthrough cases in Provincetown, Mass. This provided epidemiologists with valuable evidence of how the delta variant infected many vaccinated people—but no one actually counted the number of people who were exposed but not infected. (To be fair, documenting exposure among uninfected people is more challenging than counting sick people, as is finding infection among asymptomatic people.)

By focusing on the vaccinated who became infected, the media inadvertently gave the impression that the delta variant had superpowers. If it is super, it also has a weakness: the vaccines. That’s the picture that emerges if one counts the uninfected and looks at vaccination rates. A narrower focus risks overplaying the danger of the variant and underplaying the value of the vaccines. Epidemiology needs to remember its roots and school the public.

The first generation of epidemiologists were first and foremost storytellers. Without complicated modeling, or much by way of accurate aggregate data, narrating epidemics was at the center of the field, as historian Jacob Steere-Williams explains. Reclaiming this tradition and telling a more complete and nuanced narrative of COVID-19—using modern data science as well—can help us better understand the virus and make better choices, such as getting vaccinated.

By focusing only on a rising tide of infections and deaths, we veil more of the pandemic than we reveal.

# Perpetual stress is taking a toll on all of us

As the head of Bridges, which sponsors 25 ministries in six states, I’ve seen our local leaders learning how to live and function during a dangerous malady which is impacting millions of people. But I don’t mean COVID-19; I mean the PTSD that results from it.

And it’s far from “post.” The PTSD we’re dealing with is ongoing, it’s Perpetual Traumatic Stress Disorder.

During my five years in Ethiopia serving as a Presbyterian missionary, I experienced post-traumatic stress disorder. An ice cream shop I frequented suffered a hand grenade attack that scarred the walls with blood-filled holes. A suitcase bomb at the Wabe Shebelle Hotel in Addis Ababa created rubble where I drank tea with a friend. I was told bandits killed foreigners a few days earlier on a road I was about to drive down with a friend. Since there were no alternate—“safe”—routes, we drove down that road. A missionary who provided a ride to a politician was given a message not to do so again: His fingers, toes, lips, tongue, eyes, and ears were cut off. That message was also meant to resonate with other missionaries, like me.

I lived in a perpetual state of hyper-vigilance. I walked with a guard. I sat strategically in restaurants so I could see who was coming in and could watch what others were doing. I always planned an escape route. When I walked outside, I noticed who

crossed the street and would be in my path.

After I was physically safe, back in the United States, when I heard a gunshot on a TV show, my heart sped up. My body shot adrenaline into my bloodstream, even though I was sitting in a church-provided apartment on the campus of a seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. I was suffering from “classic” PTSD. It took time and work, emotional and spiritual, for me to bring those symptoms under control.

Now, like you, I am living through a pandemic. Graphic and vocal reminders remind us daily to be constantly vigilant. “Wear your mask,” “sanitize your hands,” maintain “physical distance.” Each warning spikes our adrenaline.

As I write this, the United States reports over 800,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, but the exact number doesn’t matter to the body’s adrenaline system, which is not a counting mechanism. It’s either on or off.

Perpetual Traumatic Stress Disorder is going to impact many, many more of us, and it doesn’t have the world’s attention. It can lead us down a dark path. Some of us find ourselves losing hope, blaming ourselves or a spouse. I know—knew—two fine people, dedicated to helping others, who suddenly took their own lives. Our children can start losing hope, as can our friends, and we even stop noticing if our neighbors and friends call for help.

By **JIM MILLEY**

The Baltimore Sun

*Jim Milley is head of Bridges, the fiscal and organizational sponsor of 25 ministries in six states.*



There is much we can do to prevent Perpetual Traumatic Stress Disorder from dominating our home. To start, we can turn off our continuous social media feeds on our smartphones and tablets and spend quiet time. We can share physical hugs. Massages. Meditation. We can do thoughtful deeds. As a minister, I believe we need the love of God. All of these bring hope for the future and help our adrenal glands relax.

We may not be able to stop a seemingly perpetual pandemic, nor find a physical place to escape it, but we can mitigate continual internal stress.

Now, breathe deeply.

Again.

Again.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Notes on Chiget Beach

Perhaps it would be helpful to your readers if we provided them with a bit of historical background on, and the actual status of, Chiget Beach, northeastern Tinian, before families drive up there.

In 2013, shortly after receiving his copy of the Marine Corps’ proposed Commonwealth Joint Military Training plan for Tinian, then-mayor Ramon Dela Cruz recommended that if they wanted to put a high caliber artillery range on Tinian, creating a “Dudded Impact Area” (meaning a place where artillery shells that hit the ground do not explode), then they should prove they can clean it up by first cleaning up the Chiget Mortar Range, which used much smaller caliber weapons.

When he received no response, Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz wrote to then-lieutenant governor Jude Hofschneider on April 22, 2013: “Before we can discuss the new Dudded Impact Area, we must resolve the closure of the old mortar range at Chiget. If

this is not done, then when it comes time to discuss the Dudded Impact Area [created by CJMT], the public might feel insecure about the future cleanup of a new area of unexploded ordnance.”

No response was received from the lieutenant governor, and no action was taken. A cleanup was apparently not entertained until 2020.

It was my pleasure to attend the “opening” of Chiget Beach on Dec. 23, 2021. Old Boston Post Road had been cleared in front of the road to Chiget, where canopies and chairs were provided for the military and civilian dignitaries.

During the subsequent speeches, it was noted that the contractor who cleared the road to Chiget had mounted a concrete-reinforced danger sign in the middle of the entrance. Thus, for now at least, no vehicles can drive down to Chiget Beach. Assuming the sign is removed, there remains the problem of the parallel restraining, concrete-block and heavy-wire boundaries along each side of the road, barely wide enough for one 4 X 4. There are no turnouts to let vehicles pass.

It should also be noted that only the road to Chiget Beach and the area just north of it have been cleared of unexploded ordnance. The rest of the Chiget Mortar Range remains closed. The turn into Blowhole, one of our favorite tourist attractions, is still very dangerous. Cars leaving the Blowhole cannot see traffic coming from the left on the perimeter road.

It should also be noted that the Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan is not funded to maintain the road to Chiget. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, the mayor of Tinian receives no funds, federal or local, to maintain the roadways and historic sites within the military leased lands.

No doubt, Joint Region Marianas will order the signpost moved, the boundaries widened, and we will be able to enjoy teaching our children, and grandchildren how to snorkel at Chiget again, soon.

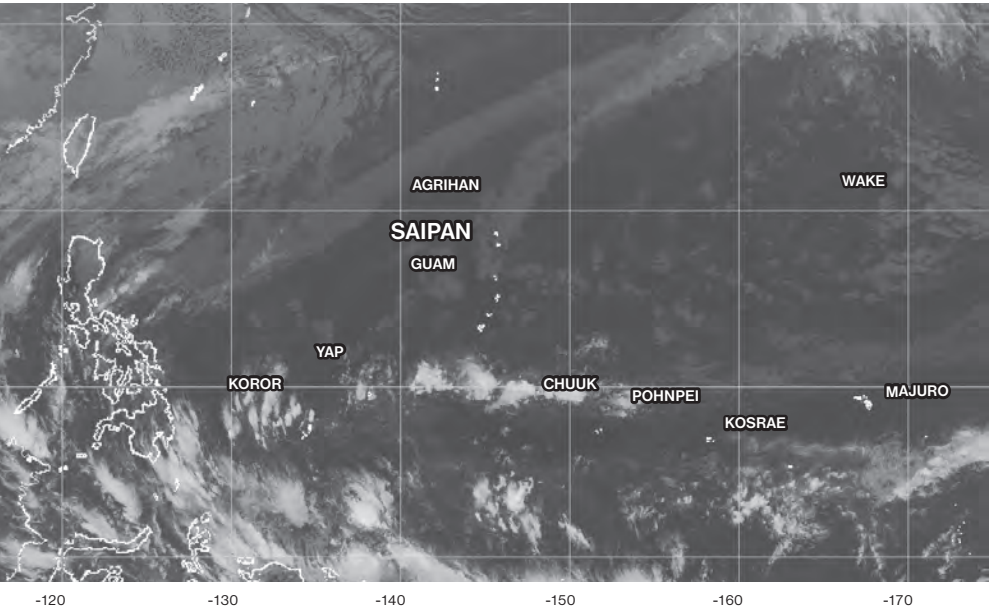
**Don A. Farrell**

Marpo Heights, Tinian



# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	75°	87°	76°	85°	75°	85°	75°	85°	75°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



**PICTURE TIME: 6:52 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021**

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Early this morning, conditions are pretty tranquil across the region. Satellite imagery suggests a few light showers are approaching the Marianas, but are still 300 miles or more to the east. The latest observations from the Ipan buoy shows seas holding near 6 feet, with a water temperature of 84 degrees.

*Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)*

## STOP THE SPREAD

**T**he Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

**Continue good hand hygiene**

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

**Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic**

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at [www.chcc.gov.mp](http://www.chcc.gov.mp) or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit [www.governor.gov.mp](http://www.governor.gov.mp) and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at [www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19](http://www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19).

**Rumor control**

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

*Source: Office of the Governor*

**NEWS DESK** For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235.3740. E-mail: [editor@saipantribune.com](mailto:editor@saipantribune.com). Website:[www.saipantribune.com](http://www.saipantribune.com).

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MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	86° / 81°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Tuesday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM
Wednesday	6:41 AM	5:56 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	6:41 AM	5:57 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:22 PM	-
Tuesday	12:45 AM	1:01 PM	-
Wednesday	1:40 AM	1:42 PM	-
Thursday	2:37 AM	2:28 PM	-
Friday	3:39 AM	3:19 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	79° / 66°	
Beijing	Sunny	46° / 21°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	64° / 61°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	78° / 65°	
London	Showers	54° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	65° / 42°	
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	84° / 77°	
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 55°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	79° / 68°	
New York	Partly Cloudy	45° / 30°	
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 37°	
Paris	Cloudy	50° / 45°	
Busan	Sunny	48° / 32°	
Rome	Sunny	50° / 34°	
Salem	Partly Cloudy	62° / 51°	
San Francisco	Sunny	57° / 42°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	43° / 30°	
Tokyo	Sunny	52° / 34°	
Washington, DC	Sunny	45° / 33°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:09 AM	Low Tide	1.21	
6:56 AM	High Tide	0.15	
2:02 PM	Low Tide	1.73	
8:49 PM	High Tide	0.62	

## FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
<b>SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)</b>				<b>GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN</b>			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
<b>GUAM-MANILA (MNL)</b>				<b>MANILA (MNL)-GUAM</b>			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
<b>SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)</b>				<b>MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN</b>			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
<b>SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)</b>				<b>INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN</b>			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

## STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

### FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable



# Business

## Flight cancellations snarl holiday plans for thousands

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Airlines continued to cancel hundreds of flights Saturday because of staffing issues tied to COVID-19, disrupting holiday celebrations during one of the busiest travel times of the year.

FlightAware, a flight-tracking website, noted nearly 1,000 canceled flights entering, leaving or inside the U.S. Saturday, up from 690 flights scrapped on Friday. Over 250 more flights were already canceled for Sunday. FlightAware does not say why flights are canceled.

Delta, United and JetBlue had all said Friday that the omicron variant was causing staffing problems leading to flight cancellations. United spokesperson Maddie King said staffing shortages were still causing cancellations and it was unclear when normal operations would return. "This was unexpected," she said of omicron's impact on staffing.

Delta and JetBlue did not respond to questions Saturday.

According to FlightAware, the three airlines canceled more than 10% of their scheduled Saturday flights. American Airlines also canceled more than 90 flights Saturday, about 3% of its schedule, according to FlightAware. American spokesperson Derek Walls said the cancellations stemmed from "COVID-related sick calls." European and Australian airlines have also canceled holiday-season flights because of staffing problems tied to COVID-19.

For travelers, that meant time away from loved ones, chaos at the airport and the stress of spending hours standing in line and on the phone trying to rebook flights. Peter Bockman, a retired actor, and his daughter Malaika, a college student, were supposed to be in Senegal on Saturday celebrating with relatives they

hadn't seen in a decade. But their 7:30 p.m. flight Friday from New York to Dakar was canceled, which they found out only when they got to the airport. They were there until 2 a.m. trying to rebook a flight.

"Nobody was organizing, trying to sort things out," he said, faulting Delta for a lack of customer service. "Nobody explained anything. Not even, 'Oh we're so sorry, this is what we can do to help you.'"

Their new flight, for Monday evening, has a layover in Paris, and they are worried there will be issues with that one as well. They have already missed a big family get-together that was scheduled for Saturday.

FlightAware's data shows airlines scrapped more than 6,000 flights globally for Friday, Saturday and Sunday combined as of Saturday evening, with almost one-third of affected flights to, from or within the United States.

## Japan Cabinet OKs record defense budget amid Taiwan concerns

**TOKYO (AP)**—Japan's Cabinet approved a record 5.4 trillion yen (\$47 billion) defense budget for fiscal 2022 on Friday that includes funding for research and development of a new fighter jet and other "game-changing" weapons as Japan bolsters its defense capabilities in response to China's growing military might and its tensions with Taiwan.

The 1.1% budget increase for the year beginning in April is the 10th consecutive defense spending increase and is in line with Japan's pledge to the United States to strengthen its own defense capabilities to tackle increasingly challenging security issues in the region.

The budget, which still needs to be approved by parliament, includes a record 291 billion yen (\$2.55

billion) for defense research and development, up 38% from the current year.

Of that, 100 billion yen (\$870 million) is for development of the F-X fighter jet to replace Japan's aging fleet of F-2 aircraft around 2035. It would be Japan's first domestically developed fighter jet in 40 years.

Japan and Britain recently announced joint development of a future demonstration fighter jet engine and agreed to explore further combat air technologies and subsystems. The project includes Mitsubishi and IHI in Japan and Rolls-Royce and BAE Systems in the U.K.

As China's military buildup extends to cyberspace and outer space, Japan's Defense Ministry is also pushing for research into artificial intelligence-operated autonomous

vehicles for aerial and undersea use, supersonic flight, and other "game-changing" technologies.

The budget allocates 128 billion yen (\$1.1 billion) for purchase of a dozen F-35 stealth fighters from Lockheed Martin Corp., including four with short takeoff and vertical landing capabilities for use on two helicopter carriers being converted into aircraft carriers, key to Japan's joint operations with the United States in the defense of the Indo-Pacific region.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, formerly known as a dove, has quickly adopted more hawkish policies and said Japan should consider acquiring a pre-emptive strike capability in response to China's military buildup and North Korea's growing missile and nuclear capabilities.

## End 2021 with fireworks at Kensington

### » Staycation + firework show + countdown party!

2021 has truly been an unforgettable year, and, it should be ended with remarkable moments at Kensington Hotel Saipan.

On New Year's Eve, Kensington will prepare firework show with a celebration in the sky for a better year to come!

The best spot to enjoy the firework will be at Ocean Grill with the Kensington Countdown Party! From 10pm, a live band will be performing and guest can enjoy the time

with unlimited chef's finger food and two welcome drinks. Every participant of the party is eligible for a lucky draw with prizes of a Junior Suite room stay, Mandarin Duck suitable, and dinner vouchers.

To celebrate this event, Kensington has prepared a few options to cope with different needs:

■ "Hafa Adai 2022" room package. Starting from \$259/night (tax inclusive), guests can

enjoy a night stay at an ocean-view deluxe room, plus countdown party access for four persons, plus next-day breakfast buffet for four persons.

■ Walk-in admission fee for the countdown party is \$35/adult, \$15/child (2-11yrs).

The safety and security of our guests and employees is our top priority, and with that in mind, RSVP is highly recommended.

For reservation and inquiry, call 322-3311. (PR)



On New Year's Eve, Kensington will prepare firework show with a celebration in the sky for a better year to come!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



**COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY**  
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**JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2021**  
Opening date: December 17, 2021 Closing date: January 07, 2022

**Positions:**

**SAIPAN:**  
(1) Baggage Handling Systems (BHS) Technician  
(1) General Maintenance I  
(1) Ports Police Officer I

**ROTA:**  
(1) Maintenance/Custodial-I (CPA Rota)  
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I


**TINIAN:**  
(1) General Maintenance I  
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 7, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO  
Executive Director



**NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION**

**JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2021-044	Administrative Specialist	\$25,000.00-\$30,000.00 per annum- Ungraded	Dec. 15, 2021	Jan. 05, 2022 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at [www.nmhcgov.net](http://www.nmhcgov.net).


Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to [officemanager@nmhcgov.net](mailto:officemanager@nmhcgov.net).

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to [officemanager@nmhcgov.net](mailto:officemanager@nmhcgov.net). NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/  
**JESSE S. PALACIOS**  
Corporate Director



**NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION**  
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514  
Email: [nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp](mailto:nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp)  
Website: <http://www.nmhcgov.net>

**Public Notice**

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 28, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance. In compliance with the CNMI COVID-19 guidelines, Face-masks must be worn, social distancing will be enforced, and not more than ten (10) people will be allowed in the conference room during the course of the meeting.

- PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  - Call to Order
  - Roll Call
  - Adoption of Agenda
- PUBLIC COMMENTS
- CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
- OLD BUSINESS
  - CDBG-DR Updates
  - HTF Updates
- NEW BUSINESS
  - Election of Subcommittee Chairpersons
  - Amend Homeownership Policies and Procedures to Include Energy Star Appliances
  - Request to Approve HAF Policies and Procedures
  - Request to Approve EHV Policies and Procedures
  - Return and Reallocation of Credits for Palm Breeze Homes
  - Return and Reallocation of Credits for Lotus Homes and Ladera Homes
- LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT
- EXECUTIVE SESSION
  - Personnel Matters
- OTHER MATTERS
- ADJOURNMENT

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/  
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane  
Chairperson of the Board

**"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"**



# Nation

## Another COVID Christmas brings anxiety, but also optimism

By NICOLE WINFIELD, MICHAEL TARM and PETER SMITH  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christmas arrived around the world Saturday amid a surge in COVID-19 infections that kept many families apart, overwhelmed hospitals and curbed religious observances as the pandemic was poised to stretch into a third year.

Yet, there were homilies of hope, as vaccines and other treatments become more available.

Pope Francis used his Christmas address to pray for more vaccines to reach the poorest countries. While wealthy countries have inoculated as much as 90% of their adult populations, 8.9% of Africa's people are fully jabbed, making it the world's least-vaccinated continent.

Only a few thousand well-wishers turned out for his noontime address and blessing, but even that was better than last year, when Italy's

Christmas lockdown forced Francis indoors for the annual "Urbi et Orbi" ("To the city and the world") speech.

"Grant health to the infirm and inspire all men and women of goodwill to seek the best ways possible to overcome the current health crisis and its effects," Francis said from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica. "Open hearts to ensure that necessary medical care—and vaccines in particular—are provided to those peoples who need them most."

In the United States, many churches canceled in-person services, but for those that did have in-person worship, clerics reported smaller but significant attendance.

"Our hopes for a normal Christmas have been tempered by omicron this year ... still filled with uncertainties and threats that overshadow us," the Rev. Ken Boller told his parishioners during midnight Mass at the Church of St.

Francis Xavier in New York City. "Breakthrough used to be a happy word for us, until it was associated with COVID. And in the midst of it all, we celebrate Christmas."

The Rev. Alex Karloutsos, of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church of the Hampsons in Southampton, New York, said attendance at the Christmas Eve liturgy was a third less than last year's, with "the reality of the omicron virus diminishing the crowd, but not the fervor of the faithful present."

St. Patrick's Church in Hubbard, Ohio, held Mass on Christmas Eve in a nearby high school because of a church fire this year. The Mass drew about 550 people, said Youngstown Bishop David Bonnar, who presided.

In Britain, Queen Elizabeth II noted another year of pain—particularly personal after losing her husband, Prince Philip, in April—and

urged people to celebrate with friends and family.

"Although it's a time of great happiness and good cheer for many, Christmas can be hard for those who have lost loved ones," the queen said in the prerecorded message broadcast when many British families were enjoying their traditional Christmas dinner. "This year, especially, I understand why."

Thousands of people across Britain got a vaccine booster shot for Christmas as new cases hit another daily record of 122,186. The Good Health Pharmacy in north London was one of dozens of sites that stayed open Saturday to administer "jingle jabs" amid a government push to offer booster shots to all adults by the end of the year.

The head of intensive care at a hospital in Marseille, France, said most COVID-19 patients over Christmas were unvaccinated, while his staff

are exhausted or can't work because they are infected.

"We're sick of this," said Dr. Julien Carvelli, the ICU chief at La Timone Hospital, as his team spent another Christmas Eve tending to COVID-19 patients on breathing machines. "We're afraid we won't have enough space."

On the other side of the globe, hundreds of thousands of people in the Philippines, Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation, spent Christmas without homes, electricity, or adequate food and water after a powerful typhoon left at least 375 people dead last week and devastated mostly central island provinces.

Gov. Arthur Yap of hard-hit Bohol province, where more than 100 people died in the typhoon and about 150,000 houses were damaged or destroyed, appealed for help. He was happy many Filipinos could celebrate Christmas more safely after COVID-19

cases dropped, but he pleaded: "Please don't forget us."

At least one American Christmas tradition was revived after the pandemic drove it online last year: the annual reenactment of George Washington's daring crossing of the Delaware River in 1776. Reenactors in three boats completed the crossing in about an hour Saturday. Crowds were in the hundreds, down from the usual thousands.

COVID-19 testing continued unimpeded in some places, while other sites closed for the day.

Lines that in previous days wrapped around the block at a small testing center in Chicago's Lincoln Square neighborhood shrank considerably Saturday, when the only customers inside were Shayna Prihoda and Michael Boundy, whose negative tests freed them to visit Boundy's parents in Michigan.

"We would have stayed home and quarantined," Boundy said.

## Parts of California get a White Christmas after snowfall

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Parts of California are getting a White Christmas after all, with snowfall pounding mountains across the state.

Other areas of California, however, saw a wet and rainy Christmas as storms continue to drench the state, causing flash flooding and evacuations in some areas over the holiday period.

A 70-mile (113-kilometer) stretch of interstate over the top of the Sierra Nevada was closed Saturday when a storm that dropped nearly 2 feet (60 centimeters) of snow on some ski resorts around Lake Tahoe overnight got a second wind.

Interstate 80 connecting Reno, Nevada, to Sacramento, California, over the Sierra was closed in both directions due to poor visibility from the Nevada-California state line to Colfax, California.

"The worst part of the storm is here so expect long

delays," the California Highway Patrol in Truckee tweeted Saturday afternoon.

Friday night into Saturday, 20 inches (50 centimeters) of snow fell at Homewood on Tahoe's west shore. About a foot (30 centimeters) was reported at Northstar near Truckee, California and 10 inches (25 centimeters) at the Mount Rose ski resort on the southwest edge of Reno.

At Donner Pass in the Sierra, which is along the closed interstate, officials with the University of California, Berkeley's Central Sierra Snow Laboratory wondered on Twitter if the recent snowfall could break the snowiest December record of 179 inches (4.6 meters) set in 1970.

There's been at least 119 inches (3 meters) recorded so far this month, according to The Mercury News, with more expected over the next 72 hours.



In this image taken from video from a Caltrans remote video traffic camera, traffic is stopped along a snow covered Interstate 80 at Donner Summit, Calif., on Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021. AP



In this image released by NASA, Arianespace's Ariane 5 rocket with NASA's James Webb Space Telescope onboard, lifts off Saturday, Dec. 25, 2021, at Europe's Spaceport, the Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana. AP

## Space telescope launched on daring quest to behold 1st stars

By MARCIA DUNN  
AP AEROSPACE WRITER

The world's largest and most powerful space telescope rocketed away Saturday on a high-stakes quest to behold light from the first stars and galaxies and scour the universe for hints of life.

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope soared from French Guiana on South America's northeastern coast, riding a European Ariane rocket into the Christmas morning sky.

"What an amazing Christmas present," said Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's science mission chief.

The \$10 billion observatory hurtled toward its destination 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away, or more than four times beyond the moon. It

will take a month to get there and another five months before its infrared eyes are ready to start scanning the cosmos.

First, the telescope's enormous mirror and sunshield need to unfurl; they were folded origami-style to fit into the rocket's nose cone. Otherwise, the observatory won't be able to peer back in time 13.7 billion years as anticipated, within a mere 100 million years of the universe-forming Big Bang.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson called Webb a time machine that will provide "a better understanding of our universe and our place in it: who we are, what we are, the search that's eternal."

"We are going to discover incredible things that we never imagined," Nelson said fol-

lowing liftoff, speaking from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. But he cautioned: "There are still innumerable things that have to work and they have to work perfectly ... we know that in great reward there is great risk."

Intended as a successor to the aging Hubble Space Telescope, the long-delayed James Webb is named after NASA's administrator during the 1960s. NASA partnered with the European and Canadian space agencies to build and launch the new 7-ton telescope, with thousands of people from 29 countries working on it since the 1990s.

With the launch falling on Christmas and a global surge in COVID-19 cases, there were fewer spectators at the French Guiana launch site

than expected. Nelson bowed out along with a congressional delegation and many contractors who worked on the telescope.

Around the world, astronomers and countless others tuned in, anxious to see Webb finally taking flight after years of setbacks. Last-minute technical snags bumped the launch nearly a week, then gusty wind pushed it to Christmas. A few of the launch controllers wore Santa caps in celebration.

"We have delivered a Christmas gift today for humanity," said European Space Agency director general Josef Aschbacher. He described it as a special moment, but added: "It's very nerve-racking. I couldn't do launches every single day. This would not be good for my life expectancy."



# Asia

## 40 dead in Bangladesh ferry fire



A burnt passenger ferry is seen anchored off the coast of Jhalokati district on the Sugandha River in Bangladesh, Friday, Dec. 24, 2021. AP

**DHAKA, Bangladesh** (AP)—Bangladeshi authorities buried 23 unclaimed bodies on Saturday after a day-long search failed to recover more victims or survivors of a massive fire on a crowded river ferry that left 40 people dead.

Habibur Rahman, a top government official, said he had an incomplete list of 17 missing people who were on board the ferry on Friday when the fire awoke passengers around 3 a.m., forcing many to leap into cold waters and swim ashore.

Divers looked for more survivors before suspending their efforts at sunset on Saturday.

Rahman said 50 people were being treated in two hospitals, while 19 others have been sent home.

Dr. Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of the Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute in Dhaka,

said his hospital was treating 15 people for serious burns. “I would say everyone is critical and no one is out of danger,” he said.

Thirty-five injured in another hospital in Barishal were out of danger, said hospital Director Dr. Saiful Isalm.

Investigators inspected the fire-ravaged ferry MV Abhijan-10, and one of them, Mohammed Tofayel Islam, said they found some defects in the engine room. “We’re trying to unearth other possible reasons,” he said.

It took 15 fire engines several hours to control the blaze and cool down the vessel, according to fire officer Kamal Uddin Bhuiyan, who led the rescue operation. Afterward, the blackened hull of the ferry sat anchored at the river’s edge while many anxious relatives gathered on the banks.

The ferry was carrying some 800 passengers, many

of whom were traveling to visit family and friends for the weekend, officials said.

Police officer Moinul Haque said rescuers recovered 37 bodies from the river, while two people died from burns on the way to the hospital. Another injured passenger died overnight in a Dhaka hospital.

The ferry was traveling from Dhaka to Barguna, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) to the south. It caught fire off the coast of Jhalokati district on the Sugandha River, toward the end of the journey.

Ferries are a leading means of transportation in Bangladesh, which is crisscrossed by about 130 rivers, and accidents involving the vessels are common, often blamed on overcrowding or lax safety rules. In April, 25 people died after a ferry collided with another vessel and capsized outside Dhaka.

was among the wounded who were rushed to a hospital. The police sergeant who carried out the shooting has been arrested after he surrendered to a separate police station and handed over two T-56 assault rifles and ammunition, police spokesman Nihal Thaldawa said. The motive for the shooting was not immediately known.

### SKorea ex-President Park, jailed for corruption, is pardoned

**SEOUL, South Korea** (AP)—South Korean President Moon Jae-in said Friday he will pardon his chief conservative rival and predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who is

serving a lengthy prison term for bribery and other crimes. Moon’s liberal government said the pardon is meant to promote national unity in the face of difficulties brought by the pandemic. Some observers say Moon may want to ease conservative criticism stemming from Park’s health problems, or even use her to split the opposition ahead of a presidential election in March. “We should move into a new era by getting over the pains of the past. It’s time to boldly pull together all our strengths for the future rather than fighting against each other while being preoccupied with the past,” Moon said in remarks released by his office.

# World

## 6 killed in suicide bomb attack in eastern Congo

**BENI, Congo** (AP)—A suicide bomber attacked a restaurant and bar Saturday as patrons gathered on Christmas Day, killing at least six others in an eastern Congolese town where Islamic extremists are known to be active.

Heavy gunfire rang out shortly after the bomb went off, with panicked crowds fleeing the town’s center.

Saturday’s attack marked the first known time that a suicide bomber has killed victims in eastern Congo, where an Islamic State group affiliate earlier this year took responsibility for a suicide bombing near another bar in Beni who had caused no other casualties.

The latest violence only deepens fear that religious extremism has taken hold in a region already plagued for years by rebels.

Gen. Sylvain Ekenge, spokesperson for the governor of North Kivu, said that security guards had blocked the bomber from entering the crowded bar and so the person instead detonated the explosives at the entrance.

“We call on people to remain vigilant and to avoid crowded areas during the holiday season,” he said in a statement. “In the city and territory of Beni, it is difficult, in these times to know who is who.”

Rachel Magali had been at the restaurant-bar for about three hours with her sister-in-law and several others when she heard a loud noise outside.

“Suddenly we saw black smoke surrounding the bar and people started to cry,” she told The Associated Press. “We rushed to the exit where I saw people lying down.

There were green plastic chairs scattered everywhere and I also saw heads and arms no longer attached. It was really horrible.”

Among the dead were two children, according to Mayor Narcisse Muteba, who is also a police colonel. At least 13 other people were wounded and taken to a local hospital.

“Investigations are underway to find the perpetrators of this terrorist attack,” he told The Associated Press.

The town has long been targeted by rebels from the Allied Democratic Forces, or ADF, a group that traces its origins to neighboring Uganda. But in June the Islamic State group’s Central Africa Province said it was behind the suicide bomber and another explosion that same day at a Catholic church that wounded two people.

### WORLD BRIEFS

#### Greece: Death toll from capsized migrant boat rises to 16

**ATHENS, Greece** (AP)—At least 16 people died after a migrant boat capsized in the Aegean Sea late Friday, bringing the three-day death toll from such shipwrecks in Greek waters to at least 30. The deadly accidents came as smugglers who arrange sea crossings for Europe-bound asylum-seekers increasingly favor a perilous route from Turkey to Italy, avoiding Greece’s heavily patrolled eastern Aegean islands that were a prime destination for years. The Greek coast guard said Saturday that 63 people were rescued after a sailboat capsized late Friday some 8 kilometers (5 miles) off the island of Paros, in the central Aegean. The coast guard reported 13 deaths as of late Friday, but three more bodies were found early Saturday. Survivors told the coast guard that about 80 people had been on the vessel. The boat was towed to a nearby port, and authorities said the search for survivors and victims continued.

#### Russia blocks website of group that tracks political arrests

**MOSCOW** (AP)—A Russian organization that tracks political arrests and provides legal aid to detainees said Saturday that government regulators blocked its website, the latest move in a months-long crackdown on independent media and human rights organizations. OVD-Info reported that Russia’s internet and communications watchdog, Roskomnadzor, blocked the group’s website. The organization said in a tweet that it wasn’t formally notified about the decision and doesn’t know the reason for the action beyond that it was ordered by a court outside Moscow on Monday. The website was unavailable to Russian internet users on Saturday and was listed on the government’s registry of banned web pages. In light of the move, OVD-Info urged support-

ers to follow its pages on a number of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Russian social network VK and messaging app Telegram.

#### 5 killed in Christmas morning gunfire in northeast Brazil

**BRASILIA, Brazil** (AP)—Five people were killed and six others were wounded by gunfire while celebrating Christmas on a soccer field in the northeastern city of Fortaleza early Saturday, according to the Ceara state Public Security Secretariat. According to the agency’s press office, three people have been arrested. Local news media say the crime may have been motivated by a feud between criminal factions. Authorities said only two of the victims had been identified: One is 21 and the other 26 years old and both had a police record for crimes including criminal association, illegal firearms, receiving stolen goods, and disturbing the peace.

#### El Salvador frees three women convicted of abortions

**SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador** (AP)—President Nayib Bukele’s government has freed three Salvadoran women who were sentenced to 30 years in prison under the nation’s strict anti-abortion laws after suffering obstetric emergencies, according to abortion rights groups. Morena Herrera of the Citizen’s Group for the Depenalization of Abortion said late Friday that the group was told one woman would be set free at presidential order, but when they went to the prison to greet her, three were released. “We presented ourselves at the prison in Zacatecoluca and Karen, Kathy and Evelyn left. They are free and in their homes,” Herrera said. She said she had no additional information about the decision, though she noted that petitions were pending before the Supreme Court to commute the women’s sentences.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### Sri Lanka cop fatally shoots 4 officers in former war zone

**COLOMBO, Sri Lanka** (AP)—A policeman opened fire on a group of fellow officers in Sri Lanka, killing four of them and wounding three others, a police spokesman said Saturday. The shooting occurred Friday night inside a police station in the small town of Thirukkivil in eastern Sri Lanka, a police statement said. The town is located in the island’s former war zone, which has been largely peaceful since the civil war ended in 2009. The town is about 336 kilometers (208 miles) east of the capital Colombo. The officer in charge of the police station



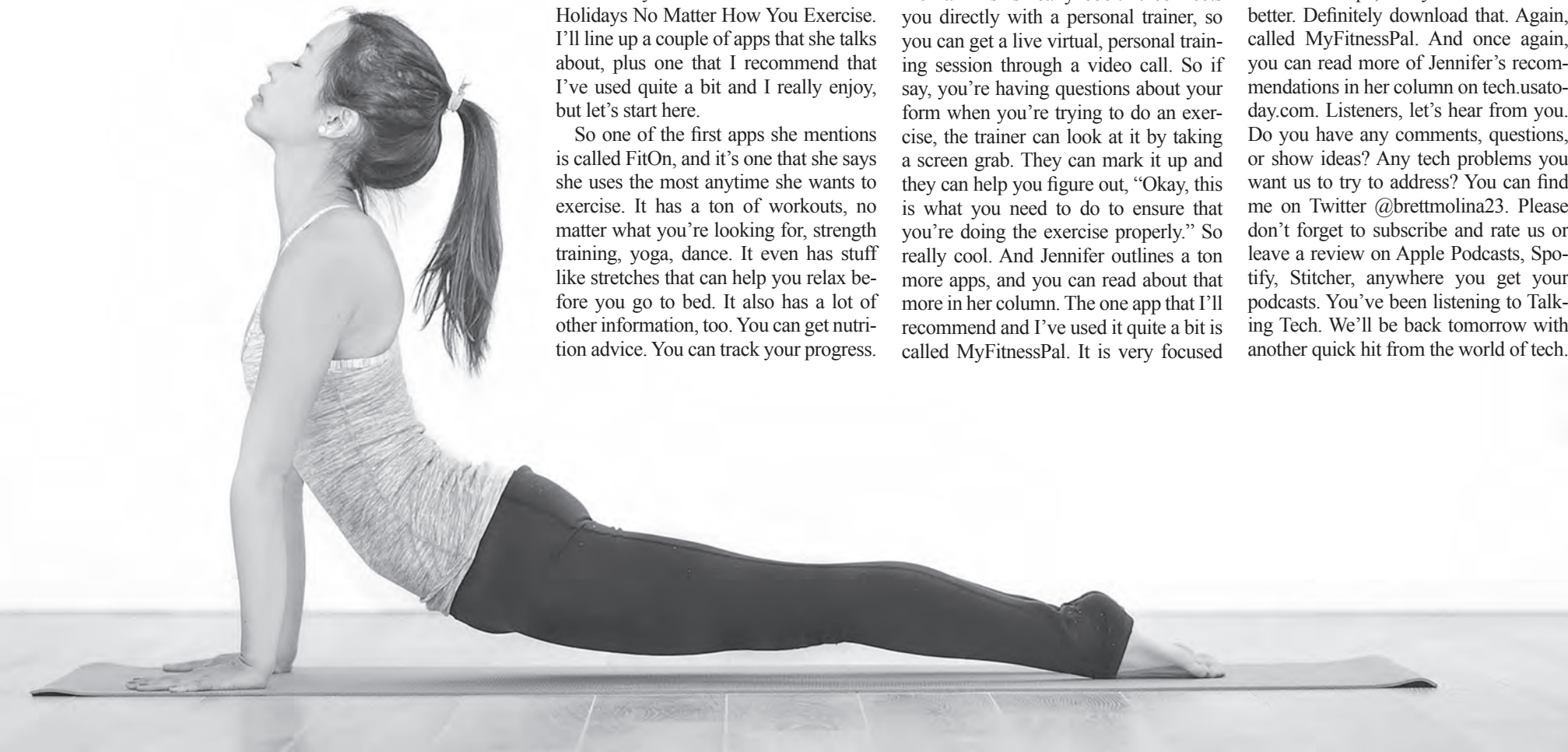
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Apps to help you maintain your fitness routine: Talking Tech podcast

By BRETT MOLINA  
USA TODAY



It play on the player above to hear the podcast and follow along with the transcript below. This transcript was automatically generated, and then edited for clarity in its current form. There may be some differences between the audio and the text.

Brett Molina:  
Hey there listeners. It's Brett Molina. Welcome back to Talking Tech. It's the holiday season. So between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we're obviously all enjoying a lot of food. Whether it's Thanksgiving turkey, all the trimmings, Christmas cookies, Christmas whatever. We're obviously eating a lot over these last several weeks in the midst of the holiday season. Now, for some of us, you're probably wanting to maintain a fitness routine or stay healthy at least a little bit while you enjoy the holidays. This is where tech comes in. My colleague, Jennifer Jolly writes about this in a column that you can read on tech.usatoday.com. It's called Use This Tech to Stick to your Fitness Routine over the Holidays No Matter How You Exercise. I'll line up a couple of apps that she talks about, plus one that I recommend that I've used quite a bit and I really enjoy, but let's start here.  
So one of the first apps she mentions is called FitOn, and it's one that she says she uses the most anytime she wants to exercise. It has a ton of workouts, no matter what you're looking for, strength training, yoga, dance. It even has stuff like stretches that can help you relax before you go to bed. It also has a lot of other information, too. You can get nutrition advice. You can track your progress.



You can also share progress with friends if you decide to. It's optional. There's a free version that you can get, but there's also a pro plan. That's at 19.99 a month or 119.99 a year, and that gives you custom music. You can connect to health monitoring devices. You can download things for offline and a lot of other stuff. So obviously one really great fitness app.  
The other one she mentions is called FlexIt. This is really cool. It connects you directly with a personal trainer, so you can get a live virtual, personal training session through a video call. So if say, you're having questions about your form when you're trying to do an exercise, the trainer can look at it by taking a screen grab. They can mark it up and they can help you figure out, "Okay, this is what you need to do to ensure that you're doing the exercise properly." So really cool. And Jennifer outlines a ton more apps, and you can read about that more in her column. The one app that I'll recommend and I've used it quite a bit is called MyFitnessPal. It is very focused

on nutrition. It's a really great app to use if you're tracking calories and wanting to, again, indulge in the holidays, but you don't want to go too overboard.  
The way it works is you can take the food you eat and you just log it every day. And so really simple to use. They have a ton of items you can search to pinpoint exactly what you ate and how much. It even has some fast food stuff there too. If say you get a meal at Chipotle, for example, you can log that as part of it. It's got a lot of detail, a lot of information you can really drill down and get precise. It'll start off with you plugging in info, like your height and weight and your activity and things like that. And then it'll tell you, okay, you can eat this many calories to lose weight or maintain your weight or whatever it is. And then you go from there.  
But again, it's super useful. It's probably one of my favorite health fitness apps that I've ever used. I really enjoy it. If you haven't used it yet and you're looking for something to help get you back into shape, or try to eat a little bit better. Definitely download that. Again, called MyFitnessPal. And once again, you can read more of Jennifer's recommendations in her column on tech.usatoday.com. Listeners, let's hear from you. Do you have any comments, questions, or show ideas? Any tech problems you want us to try to address? You can find me on Twitter @brettmolina23. Please don't forget to subscribe and rate us or leave a review on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, anywhere you get your podcasts. You've been listening to Talking Tech. We'll be back tomorrow with another quick hit from the world of tech.

Consumer health: Tips for protecting your joints from rheumatoid arthritis pain

Joint protection is a proven strategy to help you manage rheumatoid arthritis pain and perform daily activities more easily.  
Arthritic joints can't tolerate as much stress as healthy joints. Pushing, pulling or twisting motions can be painful. Think about ways you can avoid unnecessarily stressing your joints.  
Don't be tempted to work through your rheumatoid arthritis pain. You might make the pain worse and increase your risk of developing joint deformities.  
**Respect your pain**  
If an activity causes joint pain, change the way you do that activity. Continuing the activity despite pain can damage your joint. Forgoing the activity altogether can lead to joint



Don't be tempted to work through your rheumatoid arthritis pain.  
stiffness through lack of use.  
As a general guideline, if pain persists for one hour after you do an activity, consider changing how you do it. For example:  
Take rest breaks.  
Use adaptive tools.

Alternate between sitting and stretching, and light and moderate activities, throughout the day.  
If you have pain in your feet, wear proper shoes. Ask your health care provider or occupational therapist for specific recommendations.  
**Choose the strongest joint for the job**  
Large joints are stronger than small ones. Save your smaller, weaker joints for the specific jobs that only they can accomplish, and favor large joints when possible.  
For example:  
Carry objects with your palm open, distributing the weight equally over your forearm.  
Carry your purse or satchel over your shoulder instead of grasping it with your hand. If your shoulder is

painful, use a backpack.  
Slide objects along a counter or workbench rather than lifting them.  
Use your thigh muscles to rise from a chair instead of pushing off with your hands.  
Spare your fingers as much work as possible. Try to:  
Avoid prolonged pinching or gripping motions. Use less force to hold tools or equipment.  
Rest your hands flat and open rather than in a tight fist.  
Ask your health care provider or occupational therapist about using specially designed devices that help spread the force throughout your palm or arm. (Mayo Clinic News Network)  
Mayo Clinic News Network is your source for health news, advances in research and wellness tips.

HEALTHY LIVING

What not to eat

A study shows that eating certain foods contributes to a larger amount of weight gain over time.

Hold the chips

Average amount of weight gained by study participants every four years over a 20-year period that was associated with these foods, in pounds (kilograms):

Potato chips	1.7 (0.77)
Potatoes	1.3 (0.58)
Sugary drinks	1.0 (0.45)
Red meat	.95 (0.43)
Alcohol*	.41 (0.19)

\*One drink daily

Source: Harvard School of Public Health



# Life & Style

## 3 members of K-pop sensation BTS diagnosed with COVID-19

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Three members of the K-pop superstar group BTS have been infected with the coronavirus after returning from abroad, their management agency said.

RM and Jin were diagnosed with COVID-19 on Saturday evening, the Big Hit Music agency said in a statement. It earlier said another member, Suga, tested positive for the virus on Friday.

All three took their second jabs in August, the agency said.

BTS is a seven-member boyband. The four other members are J-Hope, Jungkook, V and Jimin.

According to the agency, RM has exhibited no particular symptoms while Jin is showing mild symptoms including light fever and is undergoing self-treatment at home. The agency said Friday that Suga wasn't exhibiting symptoms and was administering self-care at home in accordance with the guidelines of the health authorities.

RM had tested negative af-

ter returning from the United States earlier this month following his personal schedule there. But he was later diagnosed with the virus ahead of his scheduled release from self-quarantine, the agency said.

After returning to South Korea this month, Jin underwent PCR tests twice—upon arrival and later before his release from self-quarantine—and tested negative both times. But he had flu-like symptoms on Saturday afternoon before he took another PCR test that came back positive, the agency said. Media reports said he also had traveled to the U.S.

Suga, who has had a number of personal engagements in the United States during the band's official time off, was diagnosed with COVID-19 during quarantine after returning from the U.S., the agency said.

The agency said it'll continue to provide support for the three members for their speedy recovery. It said it will cooperate with the requests and guidelines of the South Korean health authorities.



Members of South Korean K-pop band BTS, V, SUGA, JIN, Jung Kook, RM, Jimin, and j-hope from left to right, pose for photographers ahead of a press conference to introduce their new single "Butter" in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, May 21, 2021. AP

## Joan Didion, peerless prose stylist, dies at 87

NEW YORK (AP)—Joan Didion, the revered author and essayist whose precise social and personal commentary in such classics as "The White Album" and "The Year of Magical



Didion

Thinking" made her a uniquely clear-eyed critic of turbulent times, has died. She was 87.

Didion's publisher Penguin Random House announced the author's death on Thurs-

day. She died from complications from Parkinson's disease, the company said.

"Didion was one of the country's most trenchant writers and astute observers. Her best-selling works of fiction, commentary, and memoir have received numerous honors and are considered modern classics," Penguin Random House said in a statement.

## Queen recalls 'familiar laugh missing' in Christmas speech

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II in her Christmas Day message shared the pain she felt after the death of her husband as she encouraged people everywhere to celebrate with friends and family, despite the grief caused by the ongoing pandemic.

Saying she understood the difficulty of spending the holiday season "with one familiar laugh missing," the monarch delivered her address beside a framed photograph of her

arm-in-arm with Prince Philip, who died in April at age 99. On her right shoulder was the same sapphire chrysanthemum brooch she wore in the photo—a glittering statement pin that she also wore as a newlywed.

"Although it's a time of great happiness and good cheer for many, Christmas can be hard for those who have lost loved ones," the queen said in the prerecorded message broadcast when many British families were enjoy-

ing their traditional Christmas dinner. "This year, especially, I understand why."

This festive season is the first since the monarch said goodbye to her husband of more than 70 years in a service in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Coronavirus restrictions in place at the time meant that the queen sat alone—a poignant reminder of how she would spend her life going forward.

Despite her own loss, the

queen said her family was a "source of great happiness, noting that she had welcomed four great-grandchildren this year.

"While COVID again means we can't celebrate quite as we may have wished, we can still enjoy the many happy traditions, be it the singing of carols—as long as the tune is well known—decorating the tree, giving and receiving presents or watching a favorite film where we already know the ending," she said.

## Road trip with friends doesn't go as planned

**DEAR ABBY:** Recently my husband and I invited a couple that we are close with to accompany us on a 10-day bus trip. After the first couple of days, they started doing everything on their own—going to dinner, excursions, etc. We noticed it right away, and wondered what was going on. After a while we began doing our own thing and leaving them alone, which they appeared not to mind.

Now that we're back home from the trip, we're having trouble getting over the fact that we were almost completely ignored during the entire trip. It's not that we cared that they did things on their own, but when we invited them it was so we could spend some time together and at least have dinner together.

We're thinking of ending the friendship and seeing them only at group gatherings, but we hate to end a more than five-year friendship. I must add that they've done this several times prior to the bus trip, but other friends were with us, so we let it go. They are both reserved and loners. Of course, we'll never travel with them again, but how do we go about even having a friendship with them?

FEELING IGNORED

**DEAR FEELING:** Let this go. Do not excommunicate this couple because they didn't live up to your expectations. Now that you know the extent to which they are "reserved loners," plan your social lives accordingly. Enjoy them with

others to the extent that you can, and see them for brief encounters, preferably ones that include other couples.

**P.S. I travel only with friends I know very well and with whom I know I am compatible. Before the trip, I make sure to discuss my expectations with them and am clear about theirs. Take a page out of my book, and you will experience fewer disappointments.**

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**DEAR ABBY:** A bunch of kids on my high school soccer team continually and intentionally mispronounce my name as a joke. I have corrected them on many occasions, but it only made it worse. They think it is hilarious, and my coaches don't do anything about it. I don't know what to do.

ANNOYED IN ILLINOIS

**DEAR ANNOYED:** Try ignoring it. However, if that doesn't stop them, recognize that ridicule isn't humor. In fact, it can be construed as a form of bullying. Because you have spoken to the coaches and they refuse to intervene, talk with the school principal about it. And if that doesn't solve your problem, your parents should have a meeting with the administrator and put a stop to it.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

**DEAR ABBY:** My wife and I love animals and have several. Currently, my wife's health isn't great, and I have become worn out taking care of the animals. I worry for her, our retirement

### DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



and my health as well. Caring for the animals has become too much. What should I do?

TIME TO CHANGE IN CALIFORNIA

**DEAR TIME:** The first thing to do is have a realistic talk with your wife about the fact that caring for your animals has become too much—to the point that you are becoming worried about your own physical (and financial) well-being. Then see if you know people who would like to adopt them. If no one is willing, an animal rescue group might be able to find them homes in which they will be cared for and treated well.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



# Pastimes

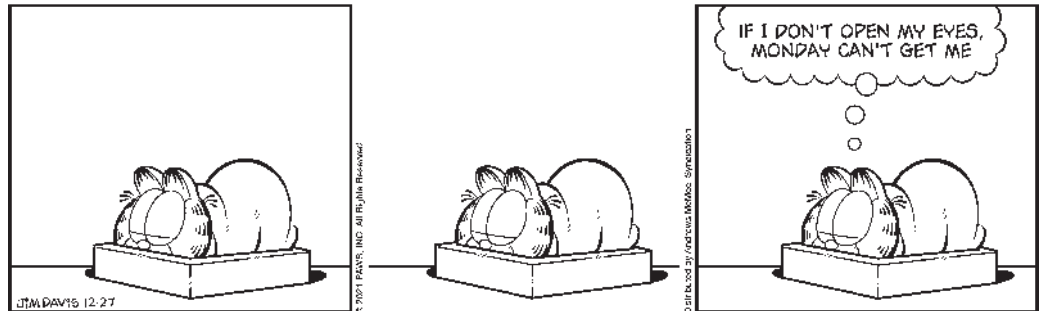
## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



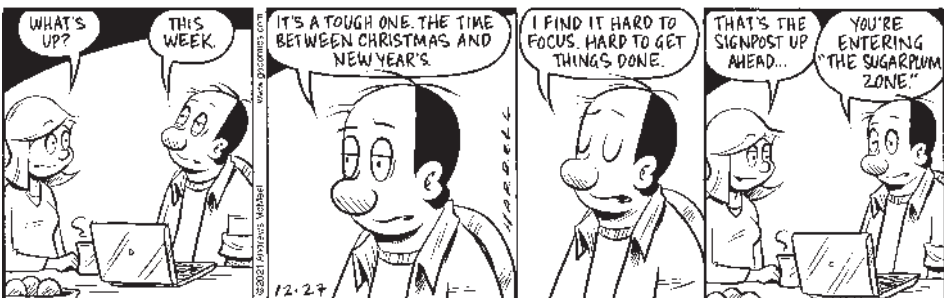
## Garfield®

By Jim Davis



## Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



## The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



## CROSSWORD

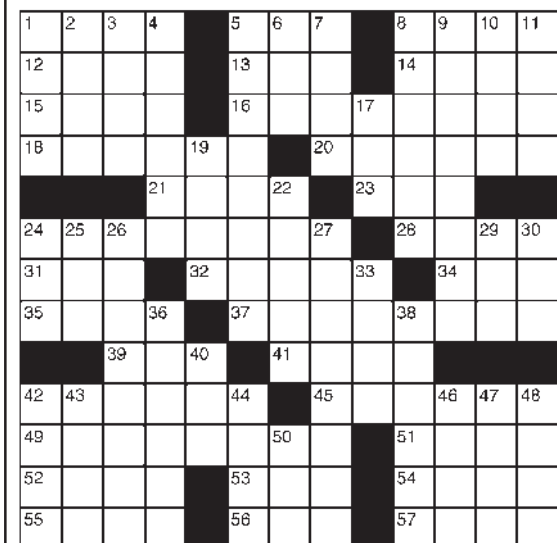
By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Pot starter
- 5 Peruke
- 8 "The Thin Man" dog
- 12 Kate of "House of Cards"
- 13 "Right you —!"
- 14 Sticky substances
- 15 Exceeding
- 16 Chivalrous chaps
- 18 Do a slow burn
- 20 Apply hastily
- 21 Towel word
- 23 Leary's drug
- 24 Milky Way, et al.
- 28 Cash drawer
- 31 Glam Gardner
- 32 Well-behaved kid
- 34 Salt source
- 35 Crooked wear
- 37 Rainy day
- 39 Tonic's mixer
- 41 Toy block name
- 42 Order of business
- 45 Orchestral strings
- 49 "Wonder Woman" actress
- 51 "Livin' La — Loca"
- 52 Hold sway
- 53 Shock partner
- 54 Power co. supply
- 55 "Sad to say ..."
- 56 Club —
- 57 Jeopardize
- DOWN**
- 1 Singer
- 2 Cathedral area
- 3 Nest setting
- 4 Singer
- 5 Gambler's activity
- 6 Nest egg letters
- 7 Hair products
- 8 Shocked
- 9 Bar keeper?
- 10 Commotion
- 11 Org.
- 17 Completely
- 19 Prefix for "six"
- 22 "Love Story" author
- 24 Prattle
- 25 "Hail, Caesar!"
- 26 Frank of "Dracula"
- 27 Chosen
- 29 Shelter
- 30 Vegas opener
- 33 Theater box
- 36 Hints of color
- 38 Crossword customer
- 40 Secret-protecting doc.
- 42 Taj Mahal city
- 43 Old France
- 44 Comic Sandler
- 46 Leslie Caron film
- 47 Rhyming tributes
- 48 Bag
- 50 Have bills

Solution time: 26 mins.



Last Friday's Answer 12/27



## STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99c per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

**CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:** Hayley Williams, 33; Jared Leto, 50; Gerard Depardieu, 73; John Amos, 82.

**Happy Birthday:** Recognize your strengths, and put them to the test. Focus on what you know. Pick up on what's trending and can help you stay ahead of any competition you encounter. Use the connections you have and innovative ideas to get ahead. Call in favors, and demonstrate what you have to offer. Personal growth is favored. Your numbers are 5, 11, 21, 27, 33, 35, 47.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Don't give up what you have until you have a replacement in the bag. Gauge what's trending, and consider what's possible. Do the legwork necessary to make wise decisions. Don't let ego and emotions lead to a mistake you'll regret. \*\*\*

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** Think outside the box. It's your responsibility to change what you don't like and to pursue what makes you happy. Don't limit what you can do or give up on something you want. Take dedicated, passionate approaches to life and love. \*\*\*

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** Question your direction, and consider if you enjoy what you do and how you earn your living. Step outside your comfort zone, or at least investigate the possibilities that exist. Trust in your skills to help you reach your goal. \*\*\*\*\*

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Pay attention to what others say and do. A disciplined attitude and innovative plan will

help you broaden your perspective and reach your goal. A change will put you in a positive frame of mind and encourage you to settle down. \*\*

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Time spent with an older friend or relative will be enlightening. Pay attention to what's being said, and incorporate a healthier attitude and lifestyle into your everyday routine. Challenge yourself to do things that are important to you. Satisfy your needs. \*\*\*\*

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Consider how you earn your living and handle your money, and you'll find a way to cut costs and ease stress. Emotional spending or trying to buy love will lead to debt. A lifestyle adjustment will help you get back on track. \*\*\*

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Stick to your plan. Make changes at home that will ease stress and encourage convenience and comfort. Get physical, and take care of unfinished business. Heading into the new year with a clean slate is worth celebrating. \*\*\*

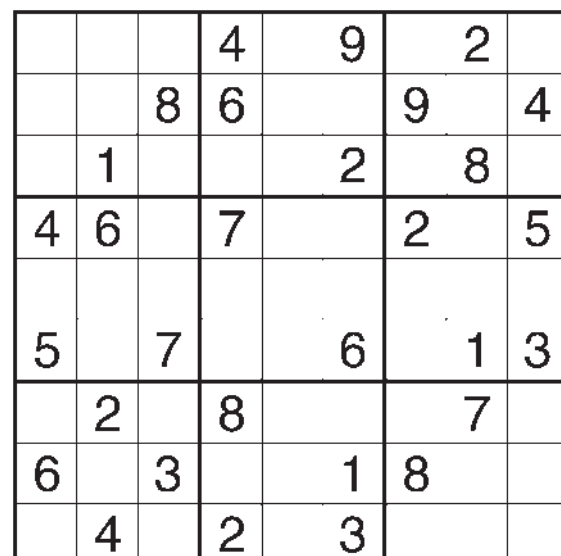
**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** Think twice before you raise issues that may not go over well with a friend or relative. Keep the peace and focus on positive interaction. Simplify your life, and it will allow you time to pursue something satisfying. \*\*\*

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Use common sense. If you act on your emotions, you are likely to make a mistake. Sit tight and explore your options. When uncertainty prevails, observation is necessary. Consider the long-term effects before you make a move. \*\*\*\*

## SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green





# Curry, Warriors beat Suns 116-107 to regain top spot in NBA



**PHOENIX (AP)—**The Golden State Warriors kept it close despite being short-handed, setting the stage for a player to take over down the stretch.

One did—and it wasn't Stephen Curry. Otto Porter Jr. took late-game honors.

Curry had 33 points, Porter scored seven of his 19 during a key late stretch and the Warriors regained to top spot in the NBA from Phoenix, beating the Suns 116-107 on Saturday.

"I drew up every play, I completely organized every aspect of it," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said sarcastically. "Otto was great. He's just added so much to our team with his shooting from that position and his rebounding and defense."

Golden State arrived in the desert short-handed, missing three of its top four scorers to health and safety protocols: Andrew Wiggins, Damion Lee and Jordan Poole.

Curry carried most of the load, overcoming a mediocre shooting night to crack 20 points for the first time in nine Christmas games. He finished 10 for 27, including 5 for 16 from 3 to help the Warriors end Phoenix's 15-game home winning streak.

Porter hit a step-back 3 and a pair of jumpers in a span of 1:02.

"Coach drew up a couple plays that freed me open," Porter said. "Did a good job of finding me, was able to find a rhythm."

The Suns had their chances, keeping it close until the closing minutes in a raucous home atmosphere. They couldn't close it out, failing to score over the final 3:01 to lose for the third time in 28 games.

Chris Paul had 21 points and eight assists to take up some of the slack from leading scorer Devin Booker, who was held to 13 points on 5-of-19 shooting. Deandre Ayton added 18 points and Mikal Bridges 17.

"They created those breaks. They played harder than us," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "It's rare when I say that about our team. They out-worked us more consistently for 50-50 balls, timely offensive rebounds, diving out of bounds to save balls."

The two teams with the NBA's best records played in just the third Christmas game in which both teams had a winning percentage of at least .800.

Playing on Christmas is nothing new to the Warriors. This was their ninth straight Christmas Day game and 11th in 12 seasons. The Suns, once regulars on the Christmas schedule, were in their first since 2009.

## Nets 122, Lakers 115

In Los Angeles, Nic Claxton threw down a tiebreaking alley-oop over LeBron James with 40.7 seconds left, and James Harden and Brooklyn returned from a week-long COVID-19 hiatus to beat Los Angeles.

Harden had 36 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. The last helper was a lob that Claxton caught with two hands while soaring over James, who had just helped Los Angeles erase a 20-point deficit. Claxton posterized the 17-time All-Star, then made a free throw for a three-point play and a 118-115 lead.

Patty Mills added 34 points for the Nets, who had their past three games postponed because they did not have enough players to compete. They were still without Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, among others.

James scored 39 points to pass Kobe Bryant for most career points on Christmas Day, but it was not enough to stop the Lakers' losing streak from reaching five. Russell Westbrook had 13 points, 11 assists and 12 rebounds for his second career holiday triple-double.

## Bucks 117, Celtics 113

In Milwaukee, Giannis Antetokounmpo returned from the NBA's healthy and safety protocols to score 36 points, and Wesley Matthews hit a 3-point shot with 30.3 seconds left to give Milwaukee its first lead in the Bucks' victory over Boston.

Seeing his first action since Dec. 12, Antetokounmpo played 30 minutes and connected on 13 of 23 shots while shooting 10 for 15 from the free-throw line. Milwaukee also got center Bobby Portis and guard Donte DiVincenzo back from COVID-19 protocols.

Boston had just eight players available after putting Dennis Schroder in the protocols earlier Saturday, but took control behind Jaylen Brown, who scored 14 of his 25 points in the opening quarter. Jayson Tatum also scored 25 points for Boston, which led by as many as 19 and went into half-time with a 35-22 advantage.

## Knicks 101, Hawks 87

In New York, Kemba Walker became the seventh NBA player with a triple-double on Christmas, and New York beat depleted Atlanta for its first victory on the holiday in a decade.

Julius Randle had 25 points and 12 rebounds for the Knicks in a matchup of teams that met in the first round of last season's playoffs. But the Hawks were missing Trae Young among nine players in the NBA's health and safety protocols, so it wasn't much of a rematch of Atlanta's five-game victory.



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30) shoots between Phoenix Suns center Deandre Ayton (22) and guard Cameron Payne during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Dec. 25, 2021, in Phoenix. AP

Walker finished with 10 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds. It was the first triple-double on Christmas since Golden State's Draymond Green in 2017. John Collins

and Delon Wright each scored 20 points for the Hawks.

## Jazz 120, Mavericks 116

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 33 points

and the Utah Jazz beat the COVID-19-depleted Dallas Mavericks 120-116 on Saturday night.

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 25 points and Mike Conley

had 22 to lift the Jazz (23-9) to their 13th win in their last 15 games.

It wasn't the Christmas night matchup the NBA hoped for with Luka Doncic among the Mavs stuck in the league's health and safety protocols. Still, it was competitive to the end despite several new signees getting significant minutes for Dallas.

Tim Hardaway Jr., Maxi Kleber, Reggie Bullock, Trey Burke, JaQuori McLaughlin and Josh Green were also sidelined in the health and safety protocols for the Mavericks. In addition, Willie Cauley-Stein was out for personal reasons and Dorian Finney-Smith missed the game with a non-COVID illness.

The Jazz still have not lost a player to the coronavirus, and the depth and experience showed as Utah took over in the fourth quarter.

Jalen Brunson scored 27 points and Porzingis returned after two games out with a sore toe to tally 27 points for Dallas. Frank Ntilikina had a season-best 17 points, marking the first time he's scored in double figures in back-to-back games this season.

## NBA continues quest for more shots in arms

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The NBA's Christmas message to its teams was a refrain it has been using for weeks: Get boosted.

With the number of players on the league's health and safety protocols list still hovering around 100—and with Chicago coach Billy Donovan now dealing with those protocols as well, calling into question his availability for the next few Bulls games—the league and the National Basketball Players Association continue to hammer home the importance of booster shots.

Every NBA team, by Dec. 31, must arrange a booster-shot event for players, staff and family members, the latest mandate from the league in its quest to get its skyrocketing virus numbers under control. The NBA has told teams its data shows that boosters substantially reduce a person's risk of being infected, and one out of every three players still aren't boosted—even though 97% of the league is vaccinated.

That comes as the league's Jan. 5 booster mandate looms for all eligible scorer's table personnel, team attendants, and other staff who have in-person interaction with players or referees. In almost all cases, if people in those posi-

tions don't have boosters by Jan. 5, they won't be allowed to continue in those jobs.

For now, though, Christmas remains on in the NBA. All five games—Atlanta at New York, Boston at Milwaukee, Golden State at Phoenix, Brooklyn at the Los Angeles Lakers and Dallas at Utah—remain scheduled, and all five are set to be played in filled arenas in stark contrast to what was the case last season, when almost every seat in every building remained empty for the Christmas matchups.

"You don't ever want to lose sight of our reality of the last two years," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "We were playing these games last year at these times and there was nobody in there. It was eerie. And the season two years ago was truncated. The energy of the crowds, the enthusiasm, the passion of fans in the building, it's what everybody wants whether you're at home or on the road."

There was good news Friday: Milwaukee said Giannis Antetokounmpo, the reigning NBA Finals MVP, is no longer in the protocols. That doesn't guarantee that he plays Saturday in the traditional Christmas appearance for NBA champions, though it's a positive sign.

The NBA has seen 519 players appear in at least one game already this season, the

most ever before Christmas. And the 490 players—and counting—who have gotten on the court in December is also a league record for any month. Those numbers have soared in large part because of all the players who have had to be brought in on hardship deals to replace those out because of virus-related reasons.

And the call-ups are having a trickle-down effect.

The G League said Friday it is delaying its regular season, pushing back the planned Monday start to Jan. 5 and delaying about 50 games.

"The delay will give teams an opportunity to safely return players to market after the Christmas holiday and to replenish their rosters following NBA call-ups," the G League said.

Lakers star LeBron James is set to play on Christmas for the 16th time, which would tie Kobe Bryant's all-time record, and enters Saturday 13 points shy of Bryant's mark for the holiday. James has scored 383 points on Christmas; Bryant scored 395.

That means this Christmas should be record-setting for James.

He also expects it to be lacking in many ways.

"Is it going to be one of the premier games that I'm accustomed to playing on Christmas? No," James said. "So many guys are out. This

whole protocol thing has gotten the worst of a lot of teams in our league right now, so it won't be as star-studded."

The Lakers are 16-17 so far this season, and James said the team has no chemistry simply because it hasn't had an opportunity to build any. The numbers show why: The Lakers—who have had eight players miss time so far this season for virus-related reasons—have used 18 different starting lineups in those 33 games, compared with seven in the first 33 games of last season and 25 in the full 72-game campaign a year ago.

"You can literally have one guy one night and the next night you won't," James said. "You really don't know."

New protocols—the league and the union are trying to find a way to change the rules and potentially help some players get back on the floor more quickly than has been the case now after positive tests—may help alleviate some of those unknowns. But the new rules, which have been a top priority in recent days, apparently aren't quite finished yet.

Plus, testing is also likely to increase over the next few days, which means the soaring numbers may just continue soaring.

"There's been some totally unpredictable things that have been happening this year," Spoelstra said.



# Rodgers sets team record as Packers hold off Browns, 24-22

**GREEN BAY, Wis.** (AP)—Rasul Douglas and the Green Bay Packers' pass defense didn't let the Cleveland Browns spoil Aaron Rodgers' milestone day.

Rodgers surpassed Brett Favre to become Green Bay's all-time leader in touchdown passes, and the Packers intercepted Baker Mayfield four times in a 24-22 victory over the Cleveland Browns on Saturday. Cleveland nearly came all the way back from a 12-point second-half deficit before Douglas' second interception of the day sealed the game with 43 seconds left.

"We've got to do a better job of closing games out," Rodgers said. "Our defense has closed out a lot of games, the last two weeks stopping that 2-point conversion (in a 31-30 victory at Baltimore) and Rasul coming up with that big pick. It's nerve racking, but winning is difficult in this league."

Rodgers went 24 of 34 for 202 yards with three touchdown passes to increase his career total to 445. Favre threw 508 touchdown passes during his Hall of Fame career, 442 of them with Green Bay.

But it was Green Bay's defense that clinched this victory by sacking Mayfield five times and forcing him into his first career four-interception performance. All three touchdowns by the Packers (12-3) came after Mayfield interceptions.

"It was just missed throws," Mayfield said. "Uncharacteristic, and I hurt this team. That's the most frustrating thing for me, because I thought our defense played tremendous against a really, really good offense. But when you turn the ball over on your own territory, in the red zone and around midfield and give them extra opportunities, they're going to take advantage of it."

Mayfield was 21 of 36 for 222 yards with two touchdowns as well as those four picks in his return from the reserve/COVID-19 list, which caused him to miss a 16-14 loss to the Las Vegas Raiders on Monday.

Nick Chubb ran for 126 yards and a touchdown to lead the Browns' 219-yard rushing effort that kept them in the game.

The Browns (7-8) trailed 24-22 and had third-and-10 at the 50 when Douglas picked off Mayfield's pass intended for Donovan Peoples-Jones at the 40.

Since getting signed off the Arizona Cardinals' practice squad in early October, Douglas has a team-high five interceptions. He had a game-clinching interception in the final minute of a victory at Arizona earlier this season.



Green Bay Packers' Aaron Rodgers is congratulated by Allen Lazard after throwing career touchdown pass 443 during the first half of an NFL football game against the Cleveland Browns Saturday, Dec. 25, 2021, in Green Bay, Wis. AP

"Coaches told me as long as I keep catching them, they'll keep coming," Douglas said. "I'm just trying to catch them when they come."

Darnell Savage and Chandon Sullivan also had interceptions. Rashan Gary had two of the Packers' five sacks against the Browns, whose offensive line was decimated with left tackle Jedrick Wills and center JC Tretter both on the COVID-19 list.

Until the Browns produced their second-half threat, the day belonged to Rodgers, who broke Favre's record by throwing an 11-yard TD pass to Allen Lazard in the first quarter.

"Aaron breaks so many records," Lazard said. "Literally every week it's almost like I get on Instagram Monday morning and someone's always posting some new record that Aaron's breaking. For us, in a sense, it's another day at the office. Obviously this one's a bigger milestone in that sense."

Rodgers spent his first three NFL seasons backing up Favre before taking over in 2008. Favre sent a message to Rodgers in a video that aired on the Lambeau Field scoreboard after the record-breaking touchdown pass.

"Hey, 12, congratulations, man, on passing my touchdown record," Favre said. "I have one request. Go get us another Super Bowl. Congrats."

"Definitely got me a little teary-eyed on the bench," said Rodgers, who saluted the Lambeau Field crowd that gave him a hearty ovation. "A moment I'll never forget, for sure. I'm thankful for Favre's message, for the response from the guys and the crowd obviously was really special."

Rodgers later threw two

touchdown passes to Davante Adams, who had 10 catches for 114 yards. Adams has caught at least 10 passes for 100 yards and two touchdowns in eight career games, the most of anyone in NFL history.

Adams has caught 67 touchdown passes from Rodgers, giving them the franchise record for touchdown pass combinations. Rodgers threw 65 touchdown passes to former Packers receiver Jordy Nelson.

"When you start stacking up the numbers for Davante, it's mind blowing," Rodgers said. "I really feel like he's the best player that I've played with."

The Packers already have clinched the NFC North title and are seeking the conference's top playoff seed as they chase their first Super Bowl berth since their 2010 championship season. They have lost in the NFC championship game each of the last two seasons.

Rodgers went to the locker room late in the first half after aggravating his toe injury but didn't miss a down. Rodgers has been playing with a fractured left pinky toe. Packers DL Tyler Lancaster left in the fourth quarter.

## Colts 22, Cardinals 16

In Glendale, Ariz., the Indianapolis Colts have beaten some teams with Jonathan Taylor's legs, some with Carson Wentz's arm and a few with stellar defense. They added another formula for a victory Saturday night: sheer grit.

"We've got a ton of ways to beat you," receiver T.Y. Hilton said. "You just pick the way you want to get beat."

Wentz threw two touchdown passes, Taylor ran for 108 yards and the banged-up Colts continued their late-season surge

with a hard-earned 22-16 win over the fading Arizona Cardinals on Saturday night.

The Colts (9-6) have won three straight and six of seven. They got the road win despite missing 2020 All-Pro linebacker Darius Leonard—who was put on the reserve/COVID-19 list earlier Saturday—and four starting offensive linemen.

"This is one of the best team wins I've ever been a part of, considering everything," Colts coach Frank Reich said. "I'm sure there are some other good ones, but this is up there."

Wentz made the game's biggest play midway through the fourth quarter, when he bounced around in the pocket for a few seconds before hitting Dezmon Patmon for a 14-yard touchdown on a perfectly placed ball in the back of the end zone. That gave the Colts a 22-13 lead.

The Cardinals (10-5) failed to clinch a playoff spot for a third straight week and are 3-5 since starting the season 7-0. Kyler Murray threw for 245 yards and a touchdown while also running for 74 yards.

Arizona's Matt Prater missed two field goals, including a potential go-ahead try early in the fourth quarter, and an extra point.

"We continue to find ways to lose, critical situations, penalties, things of that nature," Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury said. "We've got to get it turned around somewhere."

The Cardinals grabbed a 13-12 lead early in the third quarter when Murray hit Antoine Wesley for a 24-yard touchdown, which was the first of Wesley's NFL career.

Suddenly, the onus was on the Colts' patchwork offense to produce. That wasn't

easy for a unit that came into the game missing three starting offensive linemen. By the end of the first half, left tackle Eric Fisher and tight end Jack Doyle were also on the sideline with injuries.

The Colts managed to cobble together a drive late in the third quarter capped by a 37-yard field goal for a 15-13 lead. Indianapolis caught a break a few minutes later in the fourth quarter when Prater's 41-yard field goal bounced off the right upright.

That set up a seven-play, 69-yard Indianapolis drive that ended with Wentz—who completed 18 of 28 passes for 225 yards—connecting with Patmon.

"I saw him at the last second, screaming at the back of the end zone," Wentz said. "I gave him a chance and he made a great play."

## Titans 20, 49ers 17

In Nashville, Tenn., coach Mike Vrabel heard that his banged-up Tennessee Titans were being written off after the left side of their offensive line was ruled out a day before hosting the streaking San Francisco 49ers.

Then they lost their backup left tackle to a positive COVID-19 test Thursday morning, forcing them to use their 52nd different starter and 88th player this season.

"We're not dead yet," Vrabel said.

Alive and kicking.

Randy Bullock booted a 44-yard field goal with 4 seconds remaining and the Titans rallied from a 10-point halftime deficit to beat the 49ers 20-17 Thursday night.

The Titans (10-5) are a win or a Colts' loss away from clinching their second straight

AFC South title despite losing three of their past four games to drop from the AFC's top seed to third. Indianapolis plays Arizona on Saturday. Tennessee moved to second in the AFC.

Ryan Tannehill threw for just 40 yards in the first half but finished with 209 yards and a TD for Tennessee. A.J. Brown caught 11 passes for 145 yards hours after being activated off injured reserve, and his 18-yard TD catch gave Tennessee a 17-10 lead early in the fourth.

"It was all on us and we just had to make a play," Brown said. "Then we had to make another play. That was the mindset. Just come out here and make plays, so that's what we did."

The Titans also picked off two passes, sacked Jimmy Garoppolo twice and forced the Niners to turn it over on downs once.

San Francisco had one final chance. Garoppolo completed a 16-yard pass to Pro Bowl receiver Deebo Samuel, who fumbled, starting three laterals before Jayon Brown finally tackled Brandon Aiyuk to end the game.

The 49ers (8-7) lost for the second time in seven games as they try to hold onto a wild-card berth in the NFC. Their loss ensured a playoff berth for Dallas, which can clinch the NFC East with a win over Washington on Sunday night.

Garoppolo tied it with a 2-yard TD pass to Brandon Aiyuk with 2:20 left, a score set up by a 56-yard catch-and-run by Samuel down to the Tennessee 6.

This was the Niners' first loss after leading by 10 or more at halftime under coach Kyle Shanahan — they had been 18-0 in the regular season and playoffs with those leads. They hadn't blown such a lead since Week 14 of 2016 to the Jets under Chip Kelly.

Tennessee played without the left side of its offensive line with left tackle Taylor Lewan out with an injured back and left guard Rodger Saffold on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Rookie Dillon Radunz, a second-round pick out of North Dakota State, replaced Lewan, and the Titans gave up four sacks.

The Niners dominated the first half but missed chances for a bigger lead.

Garoppolo threw for 322 yards and moved the 49ers down the field at ease early, setting up Jeff Wilson's 1-yard plunge on the opening drive and giving them goal-to-go on the second possession. Titans cornerback Jackrabbit Jenkins beat 49ers tight end George Kittle for a what Vrabel called a "critical" interception in the end zone.



# Japan won't send government delegation to Beijing Olympics



**TOKYO (AP)—** Japan announced Friday it won't send a delegation of ministers to represent the government at the Beijing Games but three Olympic officials will attend, a decision that follows a U.S.-led move to diplomatically boycott the Games to protest China's human rights conditions.

## TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

### NBA STANDINGS

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

##### Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	22	9	.710	—
Philadelphia	16	16	.500	6½
Boston	16	17	.485	7
Toronto	14	15	.483	7
New York	15	18	.455	8

##### Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	20	13	.606	—
Washington	17	15	.531	2½
Charlotte	17	17	.500	3½
Atlanta	15	17	.469	4½
Orlando	7	26	.212	13

##### Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	19	10	.655	—
Milwaukee	22	13	.629	—
Cleveland	19	13	.594	1½
Indiana	14	19	.424	7
Detroit	5	26	.161	15

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

##### Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	19	14	.576	—
Dallas	15	17	.469	3½
San Antonio	13	18	.419	5
New Orleans	12	21	.364	7
Houston	10	23	.303	9

##### Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	23	9	.719	—
Denver	15	16	.484	7½
Minnesota	15	17	.469	8
Portland	13	19	.406	10
Oklahoma City	11	20	.355	11½

##### Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	27	6	.818	—
Phoenix	26	6	.813	½
L.A. Clippers	17	15	.531	9½
L.A. Lakers	16	18	.471	11½
Sacramento	13	20	.394	14

### NFL STANDINGS

#### AMERICAN CONFERENCE

##### East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	394	243
Miami	7	7	0	.500	285	312
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	250	428

##### South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	10	5	0	.667	357	326
Indianapolis	9	6	0	.600	420	316
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	207	372
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	196	370

##### North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	334	315
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	369	303
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.536	291	335
Cleveland	7	8	0	.467	314	329

##### West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	7	0	.500	285	243
Las Vegas	7	7	0	.500	299	374

#### NATIONAL CONFERENCE

##### East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	10	4	0	.714	401	293
Philadelphia	7	7	0	.500	364	308
Washington	6	8	0	.429	283	351
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.286	238	331

##### South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	410	306
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	313	285
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	258	384
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	271	313

##### North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	12	3	0	.800	383	324
Minnesota	7	7	0	.500	361	342
e-Chicago	4	10	0	.286	240	349
e-Detroit	2	11	1	.179	243	366

##### West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	10	4	0	.714	386	303
Arizona	10	5	0	.667	394	306
San Francisco	8	7	0	.533	377	334
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	282	282

**e-Eliminated from playoffs  
x-clinched playoff spot  
y-clinched division**

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said at a regular news conference that "we have no plans to send a government delegation."

He said Tokyo Olympic organizing committee president Seiko Hashimoto, Japanese Olympic Committee president Yasuhiro Yamashita and Japan Paralympic Committee president Kazuyuki Mori will attend.

Matsuno said the three officials will attend at the invitation of the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees to represent the IOC and JPC.

Asked if it's a diplomatic boycott, Matsuno responded by saying: "We don't use a particular term to describe how we attend."

Japan's decision not to send a government delegation follows a similar move by the United States and some other democratic nations including Australia, Britain and Canada, which cited China's human

rights violations.

The Chinese foreign ministry appealed to Tokyo not to politicize sports.

"We hope and urge the Japanese side to honor its commitment with China to supporting each other in hosting the Olympic Games and not politicizing sports," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said. "China is confident in working with all sides to uphold the Olympic spirit of 'together' and present the world a streamlined, safe and splendid Olympic Games."

Japan, as both a U.S. ally and with China its biggest trade partner, is in a difficult position and has taken a softer approach than its western partners on human rights situations in China's Xinjiang region and Hong Kong.

Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has made human rights a key part of his diplomacy and created a special advisory position to tackle the



Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno speaks at a news conference in Tokyo, Friday, Dec. 24, 2021. **AP**

issue and has said he hopes to make constructive relations with China. He has been repeatedly asked what to do about the Beijing Olympics in

recent weeks but only said he was to make a decision comprehensively for Japan's national interest.

"Japan believes that it is

important for China to guarantee the universal values of freedom, respect for basic human rights, and the rule of law, which are universal values in the international community," Kishida said later Friday.

Japan took those points into consideration and made its own decision, he added.

Kishida has faced growing calls from the China hawks within his governing party as well as opposition lawmakers to quickly make a decision to diplomatically boycott the Beijing Games.

China has criticized the United States and other countries for violating political neutrality required in the spirit of the Olympic Charter.

Japanese athletes will take part in the Games, which are scheduled to open on Feb. 4.

"Japan hopes the Beijing Olympics will be held as the festival of peace in the spirit of Olympics and Paralympics," Matsuno said.

## DREAMS

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for a coach to make a swimmer stronger and faster is belief and passion. And the most important thing for a swimmer is to believe in their training. 'This is OK. This way is not wrong.' When coach and swimmer share this same kind of feeling, we would never

swim behind swimmers who are training in a good facility. I think this meet proved that for us," said Kimura.

Northern Marianas Swimming Federation representative Richard Sikkell, meanwhile, said Suzuki, Tenorio, and the Litulumar sisters really gave a good account of themselves during the swimming championships and he

couldn't be more proud of their performance.

"All four swimmers impressed with the way they handled performing on the biggest swimming stage of the world. They conducted themselves professionally and did what they came to Abu Dhabi to do, which was to swim their best times," he said.

The Saipan Swim Club

coach also said sending them to competitions like the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships should just be the first step for the CNMI's national swimmers if we hope to tap into their tremendous potential.

"What the CNMI and Micronesia as a region needs to work on is a pathway for improvement beyond what we

can offer in training on our respective islands and get some of our star swimmers into scholarship programs that can develop them into true world-class swimmers," he said.

Aside from Suzuki, Tenorio, the Litulumar sisters, Kimura, and Sikkell also part of the CNMI delegation in Abu Dhabi was NMSF representative Hiroko Tenorio.

## SCLC

From Page 20

Guirey added that proceeds from the fundraising event will be used for the Lions Club global causes that include helping curb the prevalence of diabetes and improving the quality of life of those diagnosed with the lifestyle disease.

He also said funds raised will also go to Lion Club's campaign to prevent blindness and improve the quality of life of people who are blind and visually impaired.

"We will use the money we raised for the local community and outside the island so many people can have access to nutritious food and sustainably

protect and restore our environment to improve the well-being of all communities," added Guirey.

Co-coordinator Boy Garcia said they will entertain the first eight teams that submit applications per category.

"It's good to finally have 5x5 basketball action on island. Since the COVID-19

pandemic, basketball leagues have come too few and far in between. We assure everyone that this league will strictly follow protocols set by the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force," said the veteran basketball coach.

Teams interested in joining the SCLC Basketball League,

the entry fee is \$600 (jerseys not included) and you may contact Mikee Guirey through (670) 989-2632 or Boy Garcia (670) 989-6387 to register or for further details.

Saipan Centennial Lions Club is part of Lions Club International and a chartered club since June 20, 2018 under District 204 Region 2.

## DEV

From Page 20

Bachani on why he committed to the Buccaneers.

The 16-year-old also said he's excited that he will have a familiar face in the pitch when he suits up for Park University.

"I'm really happy that we committed to the same college because I feel like I have good chemistry with Kohtaro."

On why he committed this early, the 5'5", 110-lb. Bachani said impatience got the better of him but added he believes he'll thrive under Buccaneers head coach Jonas Tanzer's system.

"Honestly I just wanted to get the process over with because I have been looking for colleges ever since last year and I felt like Park University was a good fit for me. I think I would bring a variety of new plays that we could use."

Asked if he will also join



NMI Boys U18 National Team left back Dev Bachani sign his letter of commitment to play college at Park University. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

the track and field team while enrolled at Park University, Bachani said it would be highly unlikely.

"Maybe in the offseason I might go on runs but I don't think I will be joining track," he said.

He thanked his parents,

Ashok and Ginni, Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director and NMI Boys U18 National Team head coach Michiteru Mita, assistant coach Jerish Angeles, and his teammates for paving the way for his success in the sport.

Mita congratulated his ward and said he's very glad that Bachani has been recognized for his effort and hard work.

"Our NMIFA philosophy is 'Development First.' We are working on daily activities with the development of football and the development of players first. We are focusing on creating an environment where you can meet and love football in your kids' age, acquire various skills for the future at the age of development, and grow greatly. Both Dev and Kohtaro have grown by experiencing football at MP United and TanHoldings FC from a young age as well as in youth leagues and the national team program. I believe that the involvement and support of MPU and THFC club officials, coaches, parents, and teammates is also very big part. I would like Dev and Kohtaro to continue to work hard themselves and grow as representa-

tives of the NMI football family and play an active role in the university," he said.

Tanzer announced the addition of Bachani at Park University's athletics website. On the online story, it said Bachani played 11 seasons for MP United FC and the NMI Boys U18 National Team with the latter winning matches against teams from Guam and the Philippines.

At Marianas High School, where he is graduating in 2022, Bachani paced the team in assists while leading the Dolphins to playoff appearances capped by an inter-high school championship last time out. He also ran cross country and track and earned a B Honor for his academic achievements.

Bachani plans to major in business administration and pursue a soccer career after graduation. With his signing, Tanzer's class now totals 14 players. Twelve of those are from outside the continental U.S.





**Curry, Warriors beat Suns 116-107 to regain top spot in NBA**

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**Japan won't send government delegation to Beijing Olympics**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## 'We never gave up on our dreams'

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Swimming Team that competed in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships from Dec. 16 to 21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates performed beyond expectations. Now, imagine Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Asaka and Shoko Litulumar having actually trained in an official pool.

National coach Hiroyuki Kimura said more than the impressive swim times, the biggest achievement of the Fab Four inside the cavernous



CNMI National Swimming Team members Juhn Tenorio, Jinnosuke Suzuki, and Asaka and Shoko Litulumar pose with fellow Micronesian swimmers Jourdyn Adam and Tasi Limitiaco of the Federated States of Micronesia at the closing ceremony of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Etihad Arena was they were able to achieve the feat train-

ing in small home pools and in the open water and during the pandemic.

"Since 2018, the official swimming pool disappeared from this island. Then in addi-

tion, we could not do anything since the onset of COVID-19. There was no swim meet, no chance to go to off-island training or any off-island meets. However, we never

gave up our dreams," he said.

The Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center coach said they hunkered down to work and made use of what was available to them and kept their

spirits up even during the two nearly two years COVID-19 hindered not only their training but also opportunities to train or compete abroad.

"We just thought how to do our best in the practice environment that we currently had. How can we be stronger in this environment with the wisdom we have? That's always been the philosophy I've had since I started coaching Tsunami Saipan. As a result, we were able to bring up swimmers faster and stronger than the swimmers in the past when there was still a good training environment because of the official pool on Saipan."

The Kan Pacific Swimming Pool was closed down since 2018 when the Department of Public Lands took over the facility following the expiration of the owner of Mariana Resort & Spa's lease. Since then, CNMI swimming clubs dispersed to the many residential and scuba diving pools on Saipan as well as the occasional training dips in the Saipan lagoon.

"The most important thing  
**See DREAMS on Page 19**

## SCLC Basketball League set for Feb. 19

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Rip-roaring basketball action is expected to unfurl on Feb. 19 when the Saipan Centennial Lions Club, in cooperation with the Tan Sui Lin Foundation, launches the SCLC Basketball League at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

The competition will have two divisions—the open category for 18-to-44-year-olds and the masters category for 45-and-above players.

Coordinator Mikee Guirey said the basketball league is a great way to promote physical fitness in the community as well as raise funds for a worthy cause.

"We would like to invite the Saipan community to join the club's fundraising event, the SCLC Basketball League, slated on Feb. 19, 2022. The tournament will run from Feb. 19 up to April 16 at the former REM Center," he said.

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Saipan Centennial Lions Club will bring back 5x5 basketball when it unfurls the SCLC Basketball League in February next year at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

MARK RABAGO



Dev Bachani in action with the NMI Boys U18 National Team in this file photo.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

## Dev Bachani commits to Park University

By MARK RABAGO  
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

NMI Boys U18 National Team left back Dev Bachani will play college soccer at Park University.

The Gilbert, Arizona school, who earlier secured a commitment from Bachani's teammate Kohtarō Gato,

plays in the California Pacific Conference of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics.

"I like the soccer program they had and there team was very welcoming," said

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